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STARBURST

**MAD
ABOUT
MAX**

PLUS

ROBIN OF SHERWOOD

An Interview with writer Richard Carpenter

THE STUFF

Larry Cohen on his Latest Film



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FEATURES

- ◆ **NASTY STUFF** Larry Cohen on his latest fast foods fantasy, low-budget invention and cinematic dreaming..... 10
- ◆ **"ROCK 'N' ROLL 'EMI'"** Richard Ashford pops the question: What if the anarchic presentation of rock videos was applied to fantasy filmmaking? 20
- ◆ **HEAD STRONG** Annabel Jankel, one of the directors of the mighty *The Max Headroom Show*, talks about the birth of the first computer-generated video jockey 23
- ◆ **GROSSBUSTERS** Tony Crawley returns with his ever popular *Fantasy Film Chart*, compiling last year's commercial fates for the 300 highest grossing films of all time 28
- ◆ **MYSTIC GREEN** In an exclusive interview, Richard Carpenter, the scriptwriter for *Robin of Sherwood*, talks about putting magic and medieval myths into a modern context 34

◆ contents ◆

All change. Well part anyway. To cheat a mite and pre-empt some of your questions: What do you mean by "fantastic media"? Why the new look? Is it more than a cosmetic change? And surely top of the list, why the increase in price?

Let's work backwards and answer the most pressing one first. We've managed to keep *Starburst's* cover price down to 95p since issue 50, while production costs have escalated apace. However, it just isn't economically feasible to maintain this level anymore. Hence the price increase. I hope that the new package and direction makes up for this at least partially. Which brings me to (hold the muffled fanfare) the new look, or should that be the 'new' new look?

Is the change more than window dressing? Well you may be excused for thinking that the magazine you picked up was a glossy version of *NME* or *Sounds* when coming face to face with Max Headroom, our cover story. Channel 4's *The Max Headroom Show* represents the first attempt in Britain to show rock/pop videos in all their visual/musical might, with a minimum of linking. And while Max himself is an endearing product of state-of-the-art special effects, *Starburst's* special interest is in the videos themselves, and how their highly stylised presentation relates to fantasy films.

Starburst's probing into the field of rock/pop videos also highlights our broader coverage of "things fantastic" in the media, in all its varied forms.

Cefn Ridout

REGULARS

- ◆ **FEEDBACK** Wes Craven taken to task and a Trekkie on side with John Brosnan! 4
- ◆ **THINGS TO COME** *The Twilight Zone* – new season... *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II*... *Friday the 13th* – Part V... Roger Corman's *Concorde* comeback..... 6
- ◆ **FILM REVIEWS** *Titanic*, *Phenomena*, *Runaway*, *Future Kill*, *Trancers*..... 16
- ◆ **VIDEO VIEW** Barry Forshaw reviews *Vault of Horror*, *Tales from the Crypt*, *Ice Pirates*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *Firestarter* on tape 32
- ◆ **FANTASY BOOKSHELF** *The Female Man*, *The Planet Dweller*, *Nightmare Movies*, *Lure of the Tropics*, *The Robots of Dawn* reviewed..... 40
- ◆ **TV ZONE** Richard Holliss takes up the cause for *The Man From UNCLE* 42
- ◆ **IT'S ONLY A MOVIE** A flu-ravaged John Brosnan VS 2010, and there's also *Something Ghastly Beyond Belief* on his bookshelf..... 45
- ◆ **THE FILING CABINET OF DR SALLY GARY**
Our resident researcher answers all..... 46

FEEDBACK

ROBIN REQUESTS

Firstly I would like to congratulate you on producing such an excellent magazine—well written and well designed—which I enjoy very much.

Now getting to the point of this letter, I have been a fan of *Robin of Sherwood* since its first episode on TV and couldn't wait to see some articles and profiles of the stories and the stars in *Starburst*. But when there was not even a mention of it I was slightly disappointed to say the least. So come on, don't forget it's TV as well as films you are supposed to cover; how about some articles on *Robin of Sherwood*?

Grant Robey,
Catford,
London.

I am writing to you to ask you to do an interview in *Starburst* on *Robin of Sherwood*. It is a very good programme.

The writers of the show have made the programme realistic to the time, mixed with sorcery and music by Clannad, to make it a show worthy to watch.

M. Valentine,
Prescot,
Merseyside.

No sooner said than read. The letters asking *Starburst* to cover the popular *Robin of Sherwood* series have been flying in since the start of the second season. Accordingly we tracked down the writer, Richard Carpenter, and the interview with him can be found on page 34.

MUSICMANIA

In *Starburst* 80, you ask for comments concerning a regular feature on SF film music.

Great idea! Having been a devotee of John Williams since the 'Force Theme' reached out and grabbed me



Top: Nicholas Grace as the scheming Sheriff (on his scheming horse?). Above: "Tell me where I can get a copy of the edited version of *Deadly Blessing!*"

by the throat back in '78 I've been hard put at times to dig up info about said composer's past, present and future enterprises, relying heavily on odd snippets appearing in the press (thank you, Tony Crawley!) or shelling out hard won cash for tomes as thick as Death Star plating—and I'm sure I'm not the only one in the same predicament. So, yes. A feature on the subject would be more than welcome.

Updates on what's to be had, and when, would be a

prime factor, of course, but how about the occasional bio with full credit listing irrespective of whether it's SF or not? Fan club/appreciation society addresses would be an added bonus—or do I bite off more than you could chew?

Anyway, love the mag. I've been with you since issue 4. Hope to be with you for a long time to come. Keep up the good work!

Chrissy Ford,
Cradley,
West Midlands.

CRAVEN COMMENT

A few terse comments on *Starburst* 80 regarding Barry Forshaw's 'Films of Wes Craven'.

Having seen *Last House on the Left*, I simply cannot believe some of the pretensions its admirers have stuffed it with. Lousy acting combined with lackadaisical script and direction—its makers obviously had both eyes on money rather than art—precludes any fatuous allusion to Bergman because all pretension has been stripped from the original source that they committed their act of plagiarism on in the first place.

Which is not to say I am a Craven critic as such. Indeed, I rather liked *Summer of Fear*, believing it effectively, if only occasionally, transcended the limitations placed upon it by American TV. I would dispute Mr Forshaw's view of its ending which, I feel, was quite chillingly cyclical; his view that it was "the most irritating of clichés" could as easily be attributed to one of his own pet platitudes: "Craven (is) one of the most indispensable of modern genre directors" (which makes him sound like the cinematic equivalent of Kleenex).

I also enjoyed *Deadly Blessing*. However, my favourite moment—the one involving the spider—was not mentioned, even though it was undoubtedly one of the film's highlights. While I am not an arachnaphobe myself, it certainly gave me occasion to—unfortunately—gulp. Also there was no mention of the 'alternative' ending I had read about elsewhere. I agree that the final twist we now have is "off-kilter"; the original demonic climax with the devil figure rising through the house would have been infinitely better. Perhaps Mr Forshaw, being

TREK DEFENCE

When John Brosnan insults *Star Trek* and its fans, he at least attempts to do so with wit and, dare one say it, constructively to some extent — although how successful he is at this is most certainly open to debate. In your issue 81, however, reader Nicholas Hill insults *Star Trek* in such a way that I am disappointed your magazine saw fit to waste ink and paper on.

Despite my obvious bias as a committee member of the 'Bristol Star Fleet Registry' fan club, there is no person more willing than myself to uphold the philosophy that "everyone is entitled to his opinion". I am more than happy to pass off Mr Brosnan's comments, and indeed those of any other who is unable — or unwilling — to derive as much enjoyment from this series as I and my colleagues do, it is, after all, their loss!

However, what Mr Hill expresses is not opinion, nor is it worthy of a (presumably) mature reader of *Starburst* —



and, as such, a fan of the genre in general, even if not *Trek* in particular. Indeed, what I find most worrying about his comments goes much further than my affinity to one particular TV show. Leaving aside his expression of "amazement" at Sally Gary's "ramblings", it is the statement that "Star Trek is

not worthy of this sort of discussion", that is most narrow-minded, most naive and most disturbing. That anyone can say of anything on this planet that it is "... just not worth discussing..." is, in my opinion, fundamentally wrong. Whether one is particularly interested in something oneself or not,

no-one should ever begrudge or attempt to deprive other human beings the right to discuss what they wish. (Most especially in this instance, for Sally Gary to — do what her column is there to do and — answer a specific question from a reader.)

Mr Hill is quite right in his reminding people that *Star Trek* is "only a TV show", as is any other TV show or film — just like the 'Mona Lisa' is 'only' a painting, the bible is 'only' a book and, perhaps, the sun is 'only' a hot place to be on a Sunday afternoon. However, if he wishes to stop people talking about it, or from reading interesting and informative articles on it (or, I repeat, any other genre programme/film) may I suggest that he cancels his subscription to *Starburst* and instead regularly purchases something more attuned to either his way of thinking (*Pravda*?) or his mental age (*The Beano*?).

D.R. Uppington (Treasurer),
Knowle Park,
Bristol.

Starburst's resident video expert, could reveal if this version is available at all.

I don't know when the article was written, but *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, which was said to be in preparation, I saw in February. I understand it will be released in September, but I will state here and now that it is almost perfect Craven. The often seamless dream sequences are very imaginative and the villain superbly, if a little stereotypically, vile.

Grant Glevy,
Wembley,
Middlesex.

In his article *Starburst* video reviewer Barry Forshaw refers to *Deadly Blessing* as having "a final off-kilter twist" because of the "demonic climax" in the version which is currently available on tape. (It seems to us that perhaps the devil featured in *Deadly Blessing* was added as a commercial afterthought in much the same way the monster was included in Jacques Tourneur's otherwise classic *Night of the Demon*.)



Top: Nazi but nice. Herr James T. Kirk with Fraülein. Above: Helen Slater as Supergirl, *Maid of Steel*.

SUPERGIRL MEETS BATGIRL?

I meant to write earlier to compliment your magazine on its interview with Ilya Sal-kind. He sounds like an impressive take charge individual. I'll be looking forward to the film *Santa Claus* coming up.

My interest though is really in the soon to be made *Supergirl II* film. I think Helen Slater is excellent as Supergirl, and I think she will be great in future *Supergirl* films. Since the *Supergirl* of the comics and Batgirl worked so well as a team, why not combine them in a movie?

The natural choice to play Batgirl would be Yvonne Craig, who played the role once before. She looks better than ever in recent roles, and could help the *Supergirl* character in her crimefighting role on Earth. I think it is an interesting proposition. I would be interested in how others feel about this, and would it be a good direction for *Supergirl* to go in.

David Booth,
Agincourt,
Canada.

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

Craven Images

He's been a long time coming. But it is time, at last, to welcome Wes Craven to the top-spot in my column. Craven has finally crossed over from cult status to something of a mega-success (by his low-budget standards) with *A Nightmare On Elm Street*. The film won two awards from the French at the Avoriaz fest, which is all well and good for the mantleshelf. More important for Craven's career, *Elm Street* has now earned some \$20 million – one helluva profit for a little movie costing \$1.7 million... Such a coup puts Wes, a one time Philadelphia humanities professor, closer than ever to the big leagues. Like I say, about time, too.

He's been on the fringe too long. Probably because he's no Movie Brat. He doesn't sport a beard and never went to film school. He's a completely self-taught movie-maker. Indeed, his first hits, *The Last House on the Left* and *The Hills Have Eyes* were 16mm efforts blown up. His first experience with 35mm was when shooting his tele-debut, *Stranger In Our House* (1978). I'm sure he had a feeling he'd made good this time as he deftly avoided any cinema plans after *Elm Street* – returning to TV for *Frozen Man* (ex-*Chiller*) a cryogenic drama for Richard Kobritz, Carpenter's old tele-producer and man behind *Salem's Lot*.

Now that the Euro box-office is matching America's, Wes is too busy to be connected with *Elm Street II*, apart from his company's input – which passed the scripting chore to David Chaskin. The sequel should be out (over yonder) before Christmas. Around the same time as Wes Craven's new film, *Flowers in the Attic*, from the V.C. Andrews best-seller about two kids incarcerated in a creepy old mansion by their mother. Wes calls it: "Tennessee Williams Meets Stephen King". "It's a fantasy tale," he adds, "of imprisonment, parental treason and deception." After that, he's due to put nearly all known human phobias on the firing line in *Old Fears*. He's also awaiting a Disney go-ahead on a script about kids in a circus. And that's by no means all...



Twilight Zone Returns

Rather less inspired by the so-so movie than by Spielberg's *Amazing Stories* anthology series for NBC, *Twilight Zone* is returning to tube via CBS. Not re-runs. All new shows. Chap named Phil DeGuere is in charge of the regeneration and is

busily scouting around for feature directors who can spare him a week or two. First signing? Wes Craven. For two of the opening episode's collection – *A Little Peace and Quiet* and *World Play*. Black comedies both and Craven's first encounter with comedy.

George Romero sure started something with his *Darkside* tales.

British SF

It's not only British Film Year, it's also British Genre Year. Or, it is in the Limehouse dockland studios of Limehouse Productions where producers Don Hawkins and Kevin Attew (of his own Green Man Productions) are aiming to film six of Clive Barker's SF stories. The first is already in the can, *Underworld* – which sounds like son of C.H.U.D. and owes it's musical notions to *Streets of Fire*. Denholm Elliott is the star and George Pavlou director.

Next Barker tale in line will probably be *Rawhead Rex* – and Roger Christian is being tapped to handle *Computer Invaders*, scripted by his 2084 writer, Matthew Jacobs.

Neverending King

You thought they'd run out of Stephen King tales in Hollywood? Or they had until someone buys *Skeleton Crew*, or Steve decides to put his name on the five books he wrote as Peter Bachman... Not a bit of it! They're into his short stories now. First, *Dino's* shot at *Silver Bullet*. Next, Rob Reiner, the *Spinal Tap* man, is tackling *The Body*, part of Embassy's new three-year, 24-movie and (gulp!) \$200 million schedule.

Another Friday

Friday The 13th V – actually numberless and subtitled, *A New Beginning* – should really have been called *The Bloody Mixture As Before*. It opened in about 1,760 American cinemas the same day and went through the roof adding *Beverly Hills Cop* to its list of victims. Not that it'll stay around at No.1. for as long as Eddie Murphy. Danny Steinmann directed and Jason's killer has inherited all of Jason's bloodlust. More bore than gore, though...



Brazil by Radio

Doug Adams is a tough act to follow. Congratulations, therefore, to the Beeb – BBC Manchester, in fact – for every trying. Hitch-Hiker's Guide, it wasn't, but Richard Turner and William

Osborne's 1994 serial was fun, witty – if much influenced by Brazil. (No bad thing; it is the film of the year!) I loved the idea of the Ministry of the Environment being privatised ... Cumbria disappearing, officially via a meteor / hurricane / earthquake, while really becoming a test area called The Selling Fields with a way of life totally attuned to tele-commercialism ... and that the Lake District was now 'more lake than District'. Loved the throwaway lines like, "Negotiators weren't armed in those days ..." Major complaint: the BBC Radiophonic Workshop sound-effects badly need revitalising. From one radio show to another, whether comedy stuff or serious drama, they sound the same, particularly the multitudinous robot voices.

Musical Chairs

The long knives have been out again in Film City. Alan Ladd, always remembered as the one studio chieftain to say Yes to Star Wars being made, is back in charge of a studio, the MGM/UA complex. He has his former Ladd Company (Right Stuff, etc) cohort, Jay Kanter, heading up Metro, and currently into Poltergeist II and Rocky IV, and another of those exiting Disneyites, Richard Berger (man behind Splash, Baby, Return to Oz – sounds a fun film!) in charge of United Artists.

Neverending Yarn?

Rob Reiner stays at base camp – Embassy Pictures – for the rather more expensive production of William Goldman's book, *The Princess Bride*. Goldman, an Oscar-winning scenarist of

movies like *Butch Cassidy* and *All The President's Men*, is naturally scripting his novel, which has certain echoes of Michael Ende's *Neverending Story* ... except the kid is too ill to read, so he's being told a fantasy yarn by his father. The film should be shot in a British studio next year.

Corman flies Concorde

Roger Corman launched yet another company – after New Horizons and Millenium, it's Concorde – as the dust settled on an almighty row between him and his old combine, New World.

I have to wonder what the entire imbroglio was all about as, in reality, very little has changed. Or, nothing that affects us, the ticket buyers. Difficult to pick a winner as both sides got what they wanted. New World has the company's name and offices and not Corman films (a parade of duds lately), much less his high-priced consultancy – which I'm sure is all it ever wanted since buying the outfit in 1983. Corman has agreed to stay out of distribution, except where his own films are concerned – and he's got all 120 of them back. How this promise gells with Concorde being a distribution co-operative designed to aid other independent filmmakers, is not altogether clear ...

So, maybe New World won. It's finally severed links with the man who created the company and given his current dismal track record, that has to be a plus. What seems to have been at the bottom of Corman's wrangle is, quietly plainly, that New World is far more successful without him in charge. Roger, alas, is not what he was. As his latest titles prove. *Wizards of the Lost Kingdom*, *Barbarian Queen*, *Loose Screws*. He's still in the sixties. If not the fifties ...

Animation Treat

Been a good year for festivals. So far. Attendances well up at Miami, Brussels, Berlin, Rotterdam, if dropping a smidgen at Gottenburg. Huge crowds expected, too, for Anney's 25th animation fest in June. There's a bigger budget for the big birthday. Fellini has been asked to head the jury and 2,000

movie pros are due to watch the unwinding of more than 6,000 films from 50 countries – including Russia, China and Disneyland.

Tom Bond?

It's fairly obvious that the next James Bond, like the last one – oh, sorry, is Roger Moore still playing it? – will come from television. Whether Pierce Brosnan, Lewis Collins or Lenny Henry. Or maybe Carlo Rambaldi can knock a fresh 007 together ... I never thought Tom Selleck was ever in the running, though. Apparently, he was. Or, so he said in Hawaii recently. "A long time ago, I was asked to screen-test when Sean Connery originally stopped the Bond thing. I turned it down ... not because I had another job. I was perennially out of work." And no wonder. Ever seen Tom without his Burt Reynolds moustache? Not a hunky sight.

And now? "It comes up from time to time ... in the media. I don't know what I'd do if they did ask. I'm just not so sure that between Roger Moore and Sean Connery, it'd be a good career move. That doesn't mean I'm not flattered or wouldn't consider it."



Above: Tanya Roberts (Out of her Sheena costume) with Bond (Roger Moore), in a scene from *A View to a Kill*.

Beverly Hills Coup

Hollywood's most 'in' writer of the house is Dan Petrie Jr. Who else since his Beverly Hills Cop topped the U.S. charts for 15 weeks straight, then bowed to Harrison Ford's *Witness* for one week before hitting No. 1 again! So, Dan has been polishing the scenario of Renee Barkave's SF novel, *Out Of Time*, for one of the Superman producers, Pierre Spengler.

Tony Crowley's THINGS TO COME

Chainsaw Comeback

It's official. Tobe Hooper is making ready his much rumoured Texas *Chainsaw Massacre II*. He'll shoot it next year – after completing his second Cannon film the re-make of William Cameron Menzies' 1953 3-D cult *Invaders From Mars*. John Dykstra is in charge of the SPFX. As he was on Tobe's *Lifeforce*, ex-Space Vampires.

And for the third Cannon venture, Tobe Hooper has accepted the Spiderman project.



Financing the Stone

Any publicity is good publicity in movie circles. Some time back, I reported how Conan scripter Oliver Stone was taking Dino De Launquin to court for allegedly reneging on a deal to back Stone's directing debut, *The Platoon*. Stone said he'd written Dino's latest movie, *The Year of the Dragon*, for a lower price in exchange for pulling off his switch to directing. Obviously no court could force Dino to make this or any other film. The headlines sure worked. Some other producers read them and started romancing the Stone with the result that the film of the writer's own Vietnam experiences as a 'nam grunt starts shooting in September in the Philippines. "It is," says producer Arnold Koppelson, "the most terrifying script I've ever read."

H.P. Force!

Every other month or so, hand-outs and scribbled phone messages – not to mention tapes – cross my desk about a promised film of this or that H.P. Lovecraft story. They're never made! However, a gent named Stuart Gordon has pulled one off. With certain assistance from Charles Band regulars (notably cameraman Mac Ahlberg and make-up effectician John Buechler), Stuart has – extremely quietly – co-written, directed, cut, trimmed and SPFXed a version of Lovecraft's *Re-Animator*. Jeffrey Combs has the title role of Herbert West, the man who finds the world's most hunted secret – Immortality!

Lightspeed Echoes . . .

Starburst pal Harley Cokliss wins his Hollywood debut, directing *Black Moon Rising* for the Cormanless New World. Harley's star is Tommy Lee Jones. His scripter? John Carpenter. . . Chris Reeve busily organising the 50th birthday bash of San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, where he first learned to fly in 1972. . . A new cassette offers 150 shorts, real shorties, lasting from 10 to 20 seconds. Title: *Moron Movies*. Americans will buy anything. . . They have too. Look what's coming at 'em. Made In Heaven has two reincarnated people spending 30 years trying to find

each other, while *Tango Zone* has a shopping mall invaded by alien day-trippers. All buying E.T. toys and *Moron Movies*, I suppose. . . Walter Grauman shooting the pilot of creepy series, *The Covenant* for NBC. . . ABC's response, *Dark Mansions* is on hold for '86. . . Adam Batman West goes West with *Hell Riders*. . . Another Carpenter associate, Rick Rosenthal is making one about gangsters on the Moon, named after its hero: Pluto Nash.

Grim Beginning

As you may have heard from Michael Douglas on *Oscar* night, the stone-romancing sequel, *Jewel Of The Nile*, did not start well. Two British crew mem-

bers, production designer Richard Darling and location manager Brian Coate, were killed with their pilot, Richard Koch, when their Piper Apache plane crashed during a 150-mile location hunt in Morocco.

Curt Words

Few, if any, of the 150,000 fans attending the massive SPFX exhibition I mentioned last month at the Berlin festival agreed with the invitee tolling the fantasy films' death-knell. He was veteran writer - director - novelist Curt Siodmak, younger brother of the more talented Robert. Curt cited *Ghostbusters* as the beginning of the end of the current fantasy cycle, which was only ever a cyclical affair anyway, running parallel with the fifties, Cold War years and hotting up anew during what he saw as the 1975-85 Cold War II period.

Bah! Humbug! Doesn't he know Hollywood and elsewhere remains on an SF upswing with a dozen or more fantasies in the pipeline. I have to put Curt's comments down to sour grapes. He missed out on the regenerated genre. His age was against him. So were his films – B-movies, often sub-B. . . *The Invisible Man Returns*, *The Ape*, *The Wolfman*, *Frankenstein Meets The Wolfman*, *I Walked With A Zombie*, *Son of Dracula*, *House of Frankenstein*, *The Beast With Five Fingers*, *Tarzan's Magic Fountain*, *Bride of the Gorilla*, *The Magnificent Monster*. His novel, *Donovan's Brain*, was filmed twice but his stars – Karloff, Lugosi, Price, Chaney, Carradine, even Von Stroheim – were better pioneers of the genre than Curt. And he doesn't seem to like that. . .

Tragically, Ray Harryhausen was agreeing with Siodmak – the end is in sight. Can't see why he'd say that, except his own end could be in view. He scotched the rumours of an ILM tie-up for a Go-Motion project; he's not keen to spend three years on a movie again as he did with *Clash of the Titans*. But he's still sculpting – a new version of the seven-headed Hydra from *Jason and The Argonauts* and a series of, I'm told, wonderful bronzes.

Treasure Trove

The one true treasure among Berlin's SPFX retrospective movies was MGM's 60-year-old version of Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island*. Three directors had a hand in it – shooting it, silent, in 1926, then adding early talkie scenes between Lionel Barrymore and Montagu Love for the 1929 release.

Lost & Found

You'll recall how young actor Eric Stoltz was sacked by Bob Zemeckis from *Amblin's Back To The Future* fantasy. Less than a month later, Eric was named *Star of Tomorrow* at

an American movie convention. Understandable if you see him as a kind of U.S. Elephant Man in Peter Bogdanovich's *Mask*. Reviews for his performance are quite rapturous. 'He's near miraculous,' said one critic.



Above and below: Two films due for a late summer release in London. Theresa Russell as 'The Actress' in Nicholas Roeg's *Insignificance*, and Tom Cruise and Mia Sara in Ridley Scott's long awaited *Legend*.

Whoopie Whopper!

St. Spielberg, taking time off from signing directors up for Amblin movies, has found his own Eddie Murphy. She's called Whoopie Goldberg, and she'll star in Amblin's version of Alice Walker's next book, *The Colour Purple*. It's a venture set up by Michael Jackson's mentor, Quincy Jones.

Actually, Whoopie (a very stage name for a clever black comedienne) is really a Mike Nichols discovery. He directed her one-woman Broadway show which the critics didn't particularly rave about but the public adored. (So did Hollywood. 20th Century Fox wants her after Amblin.)



Doomsday

Forget Siodmak's doom-chat. There's life aplenty in film fantasy yet – and not just from the major studios. Director Paul Donovan has a surprise hit on his hands with his little SF number, *Def-Con 4* – an expression familiar to all *WarGames* fans. (If you're not among 'em, it's the US military's jargon for Defence Condition 4. Button-pushing time). Donovan's movie (he also produced and wrote it) zeroes in on the moment when the battle for the world's future begins. A little film sure, full of unknowns – but doing very well lately over yonder, rather like that other first-class little one, *The Night of the Comet*. And it's when some smallies can survive, you know our genre is safe – despite the prophets of doom.





Master of low-budget menace, Larry Cohen, the writer/director of such classic chillers as *It's Alive* and *Q—The Winged Serpent*, is the man behind *The Stuff*, a new science fiction fantasy. Alan Jones met him in Hollywood and found out why, according to Cohen, you can never get enough of *The Stuff*.

Pictures have a way of hanging around and finding the audience they deserve. Long after reviews and grosses are forgotten, every film becomes the same. *Q—The Winged Serpent* ends up next to *Polyester* on a video library shelf and has as much chance of being seen. I love that aspect of the industry because that is ultimately all the artist really wants."

So speaks Larry Cohen, one of the more unique all round auteurs in the fantasy field. He has consistently written, produced and directed some of the more outstanding entries in the genre of the last 15 years; all with his enviable gift of making low budgets a virtue rather than a liability. Who could forget such gems as *It's Alive* and its sequel, *God Told Me To*, the silly but very funny *Full Moon High* or the quite brilliant *Q—The Winged Serpent*? But these movies are only the tip of the iceberg really, as his other credits prove. Remember the unclassifiable *Dial Rat for Terror* and the blaxploitation duo *Black Caesar* and *Hell Up in Harlem*? No? What about the best movie ever made about American politics, *The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover* or the fact that Cohen created the television series *The Invaders*. The awe inspiring list is endless. He has written many screenplays like *Daddy's Gone A Hunting* and *Success* and has been represented both on Broadway and London's West End stage with numerous thrillers (one called "Trick" was recently adapted into the disappointing John Gielgud vehicle *Scandalous*).

At the moment Cohen has three films

awaiting release. *Perfect Strangers*, originally known as *Blind Alleys*, starring Anne Carlisle and Stephen Lack; *Special Effects*, which is one of his more quirky and thought-provoking efforts concerning the use of 'snuff' footage; and *The Stuff*, an all stops out fantasy thriller commenting on the fast food consumer society.

I've always wanted to meet Larry Cohen as I've admired his films tremendously over the years and although I met him totally by accident, just as he was putting the finishing touches to the soundtrack of *The Stuff*, he was only too happy to consent to an interview at his old style Hollywood mansion in Coldwater Canyon. Cohen is a forthright man, justifiably proud of his many achievements. 'Variety' box-office grosses line his office walls along with posters from all his films; even the ones he has had a rough deal on like *I, The Jury*. And nestling in his closet are sentimental keepsakes like the baby Q hatchling. A more recent addition are the cartoons of *The Stuff* which adorn his shelves.

LOW BUDGETS

Most people, it seems, think Cohen finances all his own pictures. But this just isn't true as he sets the record straight. "All my pictures have been done for various companies. I've never ever financed anything myself. Warner Brothers did *It's Alive*, A.I.P. did *Black Caesar* and *Hoover*, Filmways did *Full Moon High* and the Georgia Company, whoever they are, financed *God Told Me To*. People always come to me with scripts under the impression that I do finance everything I make but it's the last thing I would ever want to do. Often I never even meet the backers, I just plough on with the movie".

Concerning the low budgets he works with, Cohen figures he makes the best picture he can out of what he has. He continues, "I honestly don't know whether my films would be better given more money. I just don't spend my money unwisely like a lot of films seem to these days. I've always felt that you tend to make a better film the less money you have. Money takes the place of creative imagination and excess takes the place of variety. If you can afford to smash twelve cars you do, instead of one, as if multiples make a film better, which I don't believe they do. I don't follow trends for precisely that reason. My interest does not lie in making imitative product because the only thing you can't put on a budget is imagination".

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Special Effects is an engrossing film which involves the 'snuff' strangulation of a talentless aspiring actress by a down

on his luck famous movie director. His last effects laden effort has bombed at the box-office so he decides to reconstruct the girl's murder with a body double to restore his earlier auteur credibility. Deft comments about obsessional artists and the 'reality' of movies reach a galvanising climax where the murdered girl's husband unwittingly acts out the same crime before the cameras. Much of the films' success derives from Ms. 45 star Zoe Tamerlis' superb dual portrayal, and as a whole it's another decisive winner for Cohen. But as Cohen emphatically states *Special Effects* is not autobiographical. "I wrote *Special Effects* about 15 years ago and I am definitely not the Chris Neville character (the director)", he says. "It was the first script I wrote when I realised I wanted to direct. I had it in the trunk, as they say, and it has taken me all this time to get it financed. When I made *Perfect Strangers* for Hemdale and it turned out well, they said let's make another straight away and *Special Effects* seemed to be the one best tailored for their requirements. In this business I've learnt that everything you do will get made someday. It's just down to the right time and place."

In *Special Effects* there's a line of dialogue: "Do you ever remember an experience you've had and then remember you saw it in the movies instead?" I wondered if Cohen believed that. "Oh yes, definitely," he replied. "Audiences can often blur experiences. I'm not talking about major events like killing somebody but those moments when you have a déjà-vu feeling and suddenly you remember it was in the film you saw last



Saturday night. I firmly believe people dream cinematically anyway, complete with camera angles - everything."

When *Special Effects* was written, it was closer to the Kennedy assassinations than anything else, according to Cohen. He continues, "I wrote it when we were all watching Vietnamese newsreel footage on television and then switching channels to watch 'The Big Valley'. A lot of people wouldn't be able to tell the difference between the actual or fake deaths. ▶

Below and left: Fast, filling and fun. And so good for you too!... except if taken to excess.





The director in *Special Effects* by making the movie, brought the dead girl back to life, undoing his crime so to speak. That's why I have that scene where he is playing Lee Harvey Oswald's assassination in reverse. *Special Effects* was fooling around with a lot of ideas concerning what movies to do people and what levels of consciousness they reach."

TOP-NOTCH ACTORS

One of Cohen's many talents is being able to get top-notch actors for his films. How does he do it? "Because no one else asks them", comes the simple reply. "I

don't know what Zoe's history of employment is but I offered her the part and she said she'd be glad to do it and that was the end of it. Anne Carlisle was the same. She was in *Liquid Sky*, a really hot art-house picture, and you would think her telephone would be ringing non-stop. But it didn't because casting directors thought she was like the drugged-out character she played which is ridiculous. She wanted to do *Perfect Strangers* to show everybody that she could handle a straight part. Michael Moriarty who was in *Q* and appears in *The Stuff* is a different case altogether as he tends to want to live in New York which can be fatal in this industry. But he's just completed a lead in Clint Eastwood's new western, *Pale*



This page: Habit foaming, hot stuff! The long-term (special) effects of Larry Cohen's deadly dessert.



Rider, which will give him another shot at being considered a commercial actor."

The Stuff stars Moriarty, Andrea Marcovicci and Paul Sorvino and it sounds like it could be one of Cohen's more outrageously inventive forays into the genre. It concerns a new dessert that is mass-marketed with such spectacular success that a nervous ice-cream industry resorts to industrial espionage to either copy it or discredit it. Moriarty plays the shady ex-FBI man who uncovers the terrible secret about where *The Stuff* comes from and what its "habit forming long-term effects are. Do you eat this alien parasite that is syphoned up from the centre of the Earth... or does it eat you?"

FAST FOOD MANIA

"I wanted to say something irreverent about all the fast food mania that seems to be sweeping the world courtesy of MacDonalds, Wendy's, Burger King and the suchlike", says Cohen. "People love those great big chocolate shakes - and everyone knows they aren't dairy products but lots of chemicals. But they taste great, so who cares what we're drinking? Every week some food or another is reported as being damaging to the health, or there's a medical treatment that causes birth defects and heart conditions, I combined all these ideas into one picture and carried it just that bit further to make it fun. I didn't want a serious polemic like a fantasy remake of *Ibsen's An Enemy of the People* for heaven's sake! I wanted a thriller that was different, that people would want to go and see, that had a message but wasn't too heavy handed about it. *The Stuff* is my wry little comment on the addictive society we live in. People know they are endangering their lives by smoking etc, but still they carry on. No matter how many reports come out saying this or that is bad for you, more people start using the product. Is this madness or what? *The Stuff* is a wacky idea, but in a world where everything has been done it is up to someone like me to find something that hasn't, and this fitted the bill very nicely."

The Stuff is being released by New World in the States, and like most other people who have made pictures for that company Cohen has nothing but praise for the go-ahead organisation. "New World have been absolutely wonderful," he says, "They are probably the most supportive company I've worked with. They cleared the way financially and have acted terribly responsibly making it much easier for me to direct the film."

Working with a moderate budget on *The Stuff* meant that Cohen had to shoot pretty fast - 33 days in fact - but in any circumstance he admits he likes to approach all his movies that way. He



continues, "Filming can either be perfunctory day to day work, or it can be fun, by choosing unusual locations and good actors to get the creative sparks flying. I like writing new lines or adding new jokes because the actors seem to thrive on it as much as I do. The energy and rhythm should always be kept flowing as you have to differentiate yourself from the hundreds of hours of television being churned out each week or you would end up being like a traffic cop. *Dynasty* looks the same week after week even though it's directed by different people. When

you work on a set you don't want to fall into the trap of just coming into work every day and telling people where to stand. My advice to anybody is to try and create something new each day that isn't in the script to keep the juices flowing. I think it is this quality that most people react to favourably in my pictures. You have to make it worthwhile to have bothered turning up. Anyway, if you are generally keeping moving along, they get the idea that you know what you are doing! That way they won't lose confidence in you."

**HABIT FORMING.
MIND CONTROLLING.
LIFE ABSORBING.**
You can never get
enough of the Stuff.

THE STUFF

It'll change your life forever.

Above: It's nutritious, it's delicious and it's for all the family! **Below:** Stomach-churning stuff! A sweet-toothed junkie gets his just desserts.



Larry Cohen has never made a stalk and slash movie – and he says he never would. In fact both he and the star of *I, The Jury*, Armand Assante, wrote to Warner Brothers to complain about the more excessive bloodletting contained in the Richard T. Heffron end product. He has also never made a film from somebody else's script although he has sold some himself and always thought the finished result was badly realised. "But then that's the reason why I became a director in the first place", he says, "On the whole I can look at my work and say the story was well told, the acting was great and it was a unique picture in it's own way. With the others, once the cheque clears, that's the end of my involvement."

But which film does Cohen consider his best work? "I honestly don't know," he admits. "I have a soft spot for *It's Alive* because it was a big success but making it certainly wasn't any the more enjoyable as the rest. *Q* was fun because we had to climb all the way to the top of the Chrysler building to shoot which was a crazy set of circumstances altogether. *The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover* I got a kick out of because we actually managed to shoot in locations, like the Attorney General's office in Washington, that everybody said we wouldn't be able to do. Setting out to do the Impossible is what I always get the most satisfaction from".

FITNESS FILM

Larry Cohen's next film, which is in preparation at the moment, again for New World pictures, is another trouncing of a contemporary craze. "It is titled *F.I.T. to Kill*", he says, "And it concerns the trendy fetishes of fitness, diet and health. I got to thinking that most of the general public are pretty scared of all those Arnold Schwarzenegger type bodies, so I've developed an idea about some people who go away to an aerobics/fitness centre for a short time and come back with terrifically muscular bodies which they don't have any control over. They get treated with some experimental steroids by a sinister Soviet scientist defector with the result that their minds and bodies don't synchronise anymore. Their bodies lose control at the slightest provocation and then they have to cover up their crimes. This is based on fact as a few Russian weightlifters did die under mysterious circumstances. The central core of the film is my worry that these health fanatics are probably damaging themselves physically more than they realise. Anyway, the mythical institute in the film called F.I.T., so I've called it *F.I.T. to Kill*. Doesn't that sound like something Larry Cohen would definitely tackle? You'd know it was one of my pictures even if you didn't know it. Right?." ■

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FILM • REVIEWS



Left: Ramsay (Tom Selleck) uses some magnum force on . . . Above: The "sinister" Luther (Gene KISS-me-deadly Simmons). Below: Ramsay does some technical fault-finding.



RUNAWAY "Entertaining in its own silly way"

Michael Crichton, the man who gave us homicidal robots in *Westworld*, now gives us a movie about homicidal household appliances. Well, not just household appliances: he also throws in some homicidal farm and building machinery as well, not to mention acid-injecting mechanical spiders and a gun that can fire around corners . . . *Runaway* stars Tom Selleck as a

cop in the not-too-distant future whose job is to deactivate any microchip-controlled equipment that has gone out of control and is acting in a way liable to cause harm to humans. The opening sequences make it plain that such occurrences are pretty common in this future world; at any moment people are likely to get zapped by their robot vacuum cleaners or their mechanical baby-sitters.

Crichton sets up this interesting situation very efficiently and makes it all seem quite credible—at first. But then, however, the movie rapidly moves out of the realm of science

fiction and into that of fantasyland, shedding every remnant of credibility as it goes. Things start to go wrong with the introduction of the villain, Luther, played (if that's the word) by Gene Simmons of KISS fame. The name Luther is appropriate as this villain belongs in a comic book, especially since Simmons' acting range is limited to one glowering, 'sinister' expression.

Still, the film remains fun to watch even after it has entered the realm of the absurd. The action set-pieces are excitingly staged, the robot effects are generally convincing and the climax, which takes place on an eleva-

tor on the top of an unfinished skyscraper, had me chewing on my security blanket.

Presumably Crichton was trying to repeat the success of *Westworld* with this movie (his last film, *Looker* was a flop in the US and never released here theatrically) but while *Runaway* is definitely entertaining in its own silly way, *Westworld* remains the far superior film.

John Brosnan

Starring: Tom Selleck (Ramsay), Cynthia Rhodes (Thompson) Gene Simmons (Luther), Kirstie Alley (Jackie). Written & directed by Michael Crichton. Produced by Michael Rachmil.

FUTUREKILL

"Ultra-violent fairy tale"

The Class of 1988 meets *Porkys* in Ron Moore's feature debut, *Futurekill*. And it says it all when the only real distinction one can comment on with wild enthusiasm is the superb poster artwork by H.R. Giger!

Futurekill does belie its very low budget but the film suffers as a whole from a lack of any real sense of pacing – and some ill-used slow-motion doesn't help. More unfortunately, *Futurekill* has a message and Moore makes sure we get it. It is hammered home so relentlessly that the basic shock value contained in this Frat and Freak sideshow is greatly undercut.

For their fraternity initiation, a group of pledges are coerced into going downtown to kidnap a randomly chosen member of a pseudo-punk anti-nuke organisation. But this counter-culture has gone to such an extreme that it is being infiltrated by the likes of a psychotic militant called Splatter who is threateningly hooked on a constant intravenously fed speed injection. Splatter sees the chain of events as the chance to



"Laugh at my costume, would ya? Take that!" Splatter (Edwin Neal) on the attack.

assassinate one of the society's more moderate king-pins and seize control for himself blaming the misguided frats. And so starts a desperate race through the neon lit city streets towards the apocalyptic, and admittedly well-staged, ending.

Futurekill's ace-in-the-hole is ex-*Texas Chainsaw* star Ed Neal in a powerhouse portrayal of Splatter

who he plays as evil incarnate with no socially redeeming features whatsoever. When he is on the screen, coupled with a grating synthesised voice, the film nearly achieves second-rate greatness. But despite being an ultra-violent fairy tale, (since cut down for a U.S. R rating), the film never really recovers from its slow and desperately unfunny Anim-

al House inspired first half-hour. And it must also be noted that the actors – especially Marilyn Burns – all seem very uncomfortable playing the softened down punk characters.

Alan Jones

Starring: Edwin Neal (*Splatter*), Marilyn Burns (*Dorothy Grim*). Directed by Ron Moore. Written by Ron Moore, Kathy Hagan and John Best.

TITAN FIND

"More laughs than real shocks"

Alien must have really made an impression on director William Malone. He's ripped it off once already for *Scared to Death* and now he's remade it again for *Titan Find*, (a.k.a. *Creature*).

Two rival conglomerates send crews to the Saturn moon, Titan, to claim various scientific finds for their own countries. The find turns out to be a buried collection of life forms gathered from all corners of the Universe. Cue the 20,000 centuries old Giger plagiarised alien to hatch out of its shell and gradually decimate the even dumber than usual research astronauts.

Titan Find does offer a few reheated scraps for those in the 'seen it all

before' category. Klaus Kinski, for example, adds a touch of class to the proceedings with his brief cameo appearance, and the special effects by the L.A. Effects group (including Bob Skotak and Doug Beswick) are top-notch. There's a better exploding head than usual too – always the mark of high-grade exploitation. And I mustn't forget to mention the nude zombie astronaut seduction scene! But that really does pin-point the problem with *Titan Find*. Although

far superior in every way to *Scared to Death*, there are far more laughs than real shocks. But then I suppose it doesn't really matter, after all, in space, no one can hear you groan.

Alan Jones

Starring: Stan Ivar (*Mike Davison*), Wendy Schaal (*Beth Sladen*), Lyman Ward (*David Perkins*), Robert Jaffe (*Jon Fennel*). Directed by William Malone. Written by William Malone and Alan Read. Produced by William G. Dunn Jr and William Malone. 93 mins.



Left: "Have you found him?" "No, what about you?" "None. You?" Above: "Hey guys, I've found him! Help!" Breathless moments from *Titan Find*.



Top left: Jennifer Connelly (last seen in *Once Upon a Time in America*), the schizophrenic somnambulist. Top: What horror lies beyond the door? Above: "Come out, come out, wherever you are".

some manacles in order to lift Connelly out of a pit containing nothing but body parts. A deformed child is set on fire. A lawyer is decapitated by sheet metal. And Nicolodi's face is razored to pieces in the most graphic way Argento has ever dreamed up. These highlights are not enough though to save the badly plotted scenario lacking in the breathtaking set-pieces we have come to expect from Argento's vivid imagination. I predict not only censor problems for *Phenomena* but also judicious editing to excise some of the more ludicrous moments before the film gets a UK release. At nearly two hours in length, the film really does need it.

Illogicality has always been one of Argento's more endearing mainstays in the past. Here though, it has a depressing and shallow ring as if he is clutching at straws in an effort to make the nonsensical seem profound. And when the killer is re-

vealed to be a deformed child not even in his teens, it trivialises the whole affair. How could he possibly pose any threat to all the adolescent girls who scream and cower, when all they really need to do is kick him in the face!

Enough of this permeating disappointment in what has to date been the only aberration in Argento's illustrious career. The really good news is that with this debacle now well and truly behind him, he is now at work on the final part of his "Three Mothers" trilogy.

Dario Argento is going to lose many people with *Phenomena* but I have no doubt that he will reclaim them in the future.

Alan Jones

Starring: Jennifer Connelly, Daria Nicolodi, Delfia Di Lazzaro, Patrick Bauchau, Donald Pleasence. Written, produced and directed by Dario Argento. 115 minutes.

PHENOMENA

"Argento out of control
... an incoherent
mess"

All truly great directors have their failures – and this is Dario Argento's moment. In the dictionary definition, the adjective 'phenomena' means something unusual or remarkable. Unfortunately neither of those words can be used to describe Argento's latest fantasy/slasher, *Phenomena*. It nearly breaks my heart to add that this misfiring project is the worst film he has ever been involved with. Only the most audacious – some would say ridiculous – climax to grace any film for many a year saves *Phenomena* from being a complete write-off. Otherwise *Phenomena* shows Argento out of control in a way I thought would never be possible as he tries to combine elements from his past successes like *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* and *Suspense* with other more routine influences from *Homicidal* and *Friday the 13th*. And the result is an incoherent mess.

There are two main reasons for *Phenomena*'s failure. One is the counter-productive realistic setting of location filming in Zurich. Argento goes to great lengths to establish this area as "the Swiss Transylvania" but the look is at odds with the convoluted subject matter. Secondly, and more detrimental, is that *Phenomena* is Argento's first film to be shot entirely in the English language. And the result is stilted, banal dialogue, which is squirm-inducing when it isn't coming across as hysterically comic. Daria Nicolodi's dreadful performance adds insult to injury in this department.

Although it is a somewhat self-defeating exercise to try and describe the plot contained in *Phenomena*,

here goes. I'm not entirely convinced that even Argento himself had a clear cut idea of its major themes. Could that be why the film throws artifice and red herrings around with such wild abandon in an attempt to disguise the tedious and poorly paced exposition?

Jennifer Connelly arrives at the Richard Wagner Academy for girls at a time when various nubile inmates are being murdered by an anonymous psychopath. Jennifer is a schizophrenic and as a result has two strange aspects to her character. One is that she sleepwalks with alarming regularity, and the other concerns her eerie telepathic control of insects. (According to Argento's research, this latter gift is more common than any of us would suspect). On one of her somnambulist wanderings she sees a girl menaced by the masked killer and this is the only sequence that measures up to the usual powerful and poetic imagery we expect from an Argento movie. This dubious and deadly gift, plus an affinity for entomologist Donald Pleasence, spark the main thrust of the plot which involves such mind-boggling scenes as Jennifer using a fly to lead her to the murderer's lair as it can sniff out the decomposing bodies while travelling in a box on the local bus route! How a psychotic chimpanzee wielding a switchblade fits into all of this, I'll leave up to your imagination.

Argento's sloppy concoction is held together in part by crystal clear – almost black and white – photography and some great music by the usual team of Claudio Simonetti and Goblin. Other contributions by Hawkwind, Iron Maiden and Andi Sex Gang are intrusive and deflate any suspense Argento is trying to build.

Despite Argento's assurances that there wouldn't be much blood-letting in *Phenomena*, the last ten minutes belies that claim. A chained police inspector breaks his thumb to escape

TRANCERS

"Comic-book style
thrills"

"Jack Deth is back ... and he's never even been here before!" That's the amusing ad line for this equally offbeat and original slice of science-fiction concocted by Charles Band, the 33-year-old film mogul responsible for such cheapie hits as *Laserblast* and *Parasite*. His previous efforts may have been nothing much to get excited about, but here, working with a good script and his most reasonable budget yet, Band has come up with a really entertaining and inventive crowd-pleaser.

As played by the craggy-faced Tim Thomerson, Jack Deth is one of those hard-boiled cops who read criminals their rights on the way to the morgue. His uniform is a shabby trench coat with padded shoulders, and his job in the year 2247 is hunting down Trancers, the psychic slaves of the evil Martin Whistler (Michael Stefani). One of these wild-eyed creatures (who resemble George Romero's Zombies with a hangover) was responsible for the death of his wife, and Jack is not going to rest until they are all destroyed.

After an action-packed opening in which Jack takes on a Trancer in a futuristic roadside diner, he is summoned in front of the ruling council of Angel City, the part of Los Angeles still left standing after The Great Quake. It seems that the malevolent Whistler has gone "down the line" to

the year 1985, where he has taken on the body of a 20th Century cop and set about the task of murdering the ancestors of his enemies so that they will cease to exist in future history. Armed with a watch that can stretch time for one "long" second (the sort of gadget that even James Bond would be delighted with), Jack is sent after him.

The scene switches to old L.A. as he arrives in the body of a journalist ancestor named Phil Deth, and then the film really takes off into an imaginative blend of wry comedy and fanciful action. The first thing our hero does on arrival is grease back his hair ("dry hair's for squids"), slip into a shabby trench-coat to protect him from the blazing L.A. sunshine, and attempt to explain his mission to Phil's bemused girlfriend (Helen Hunt): "I'm from another time. Another world," he tells her. "I don't even know what you people eat for lunch!"

Needless to say she doesn't believe him. But an encounter with a Trancer dressed as a department store Santa Claus soon changes her mind, and before long they are both caught up in a desperate race against time; a chase that takes them through Skid Row, Chinatown, and the neon-lit back streets of the city on the way to a final deadly confrontation with Whistler and his army of psychic zombies.

Unfolding like a mixture of *Blade Runner* and *The Terminator* injected with a healthy dose of wry humour, the film delivers more than its fair share of comic-book style thrills and a number of imaginative special-



Above: A futuristic, high-tech set, from a low budget. **Below:** Hard-boiled cop Jack Deth (Tim Thomerson), looking like Mad Max in a raincoat ... and friend?

effects (particularly striking is a panoramic view of the future city of L.A. half submerged in the sea, where Jack goes diving for hub caps and licence plates). And generally the movie has a sophisticated look that belies its modest budget.

But what makes *Trancers* really stand out from the crowd is the way that its writers, Paul De Meo and Danny Bilson, have managed to pack so many good ideas into so short a running time (a snappy 76 minutes). It's hard not to chuckle over Jack's encounters with modern day punks, or his attempts to come to terms with modern American culture. Just when you think you have figured out where

the narrative is heading it springs another surprise on you - such as having Jack's grim-faced superior, the equally hard-boiled detective McNulty coming "down the line" to aid him in his quest and ending up in the body of a twelve year old girl! It is this kind of refreshing originality that makes it a movie that should appeal to everybody - even Squids!

Allan Bryce

Starring: Tim Thomerson (Jack Deth), Helen Hunt (Leena), Michael Stefani (Whistler), Art La Fleur (McNulty), Richard Hard (Spencer), Anne Seymour (Ashel). **Directed by** Charles Band, **written by** Paul De Meo and Danny Bilson. **Special effects** makeup designed by John Buechler.





POP *fantasies*

Looking at the cross-current of themes and techniques between fantasy films and rock/pop videos, what with directors like Tobe Hooper and John Landis plying their talent in the field of pop pyrotechnics, and Steve Barron and Russel Mulcahey providing the contraflow into wide-screen wonder, a curious interchange of ideas is developing. Richard Ashford sees the link as pointing to exciting prospects for the future of fantasy filmmaking.

This article will start by making some wild assertions about rock/pop videos. It will then proceed to labour under the illusion that it has to justify its inclusion within the pages of *Starburst*. It is intended as an introduction to an irregular series of articles on rock/pop videos, and will make no attempt at a socio-economic or historical perspective – I mean how can one be humorous when one is being historical. The whole area of rock/pop videos, I would argue, has gone largely unrecorded in print, while on the other hand, it has been highly recorded, illegally, on most people's video machines. Their success over the last few years has been phenomenal. They have established for themselves the authoritative voice on how music and images should be mixed.

First off I would like to state that the term rock or pop video is totally mis-

leading, as the majority of these films, like the majority of filmed advertisements, are shot on 35mm film. They are then transferred to video tape for the video edit and the addition of special effects. However, so that we are all talking about the same thing I will use the term pop video when I am referring to musical material translated through film or video, and used on the whole for promotional purposes.

One can trace pop videos way back to the jazz shorts of the thirties, and no doubt earlier, if you want to be pedantic. Edison's interest in perfecting the early use of film was in enhancing his already patented and highly popular dime-driven phonographs (a precursor to the juke box) before the turn of the last century. But for music and film to be united, you had to have the soundtrack, which found popular usage accompanying Al Jolson in the Jazz

Singer. If one looks at some of the earlier pop videos of the last three decades we see their use being mainly in the exclusive domain of the major music groups, who could afford to indulge their filmmaking tendencies. The Beatles produced a number of films that, if produced today, would certainly be classified as pop videos in their use of special effects.

Today, the common use of pop videos came about as a result of their original use as a boost to the sales of the record by gaining extra air time on television. Television, which was out for cheap programming, jumped at the opportunity of being able to show highly expensive films for little or nothing. This has led to MTV, the cable station in America, basing its whole programming around pop videos.

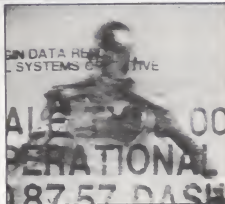
In England, the *Max Headroom Show* is an attempt to present pop videos within a logical framework and not as cheap space fillers to fit before the news on Breakfast Television. To do this *Max Headroom* has gone back to the conventions of popular music for its style of presentation, i.e. the discjockey. This leap for the familiar is characteristic of the whole marketing of pop videos.

The packaging of pop videos comes in three basic styles. The first is a collection of different pop videos by different



Left: Michael Jackson's zombie disco in John Landis's *Thriller*. Above: *Ultra Vox's* Vienna streets. Right: From *Duran Duran's* *When the Lights Go Down*, directed by Russell Mulcahey. Below: Ridley Scott displayed much of his advertising/pop video background in his direction of *Alien*.

artists. The problem here is that the music may not be interrelated, the only common theme being success. Following on from this is the collection of pop videos by one particular artist. An expansion of this area is when pop videos are linked in some framing sequ-



ence that is meant to add a realistic element which explains the string of disparate events. Referred to as the concept video, this second style of presentation resurrects the old concept album approach by some groups, most notably Pink Floyd and The Who, who later translated these overblown productions to film. Finally there is the packaging of concert footage. However, these packages would not see themselves as a record of the event, but, through the use of special effects and unrelated, treated film clips, would try to be the poor group's pop videos.

PANORAMA VS POP STYLE

What I am interested in looking at is not the use of pop videos on television but how their visual presentation can be applied to fantasy films. I would argue that the majority of fantasy after *Star Wars* are panoramic in vision, showing in wide 'vistavision' alien worlds and starscapes. We are alienated from the imagery not by the fact that what we are seeing is unusual, but by the sheer scale of vision, and the overwhelming special effects. Yet, we are still drawn into these movies and we are made to identify with simians, robots and supermen. Why? Well in a formal sense some of these films pay





that might be suggested by the lyrics, but not implicitly. The imagery often works by forcing the viewer to question what is happening, and what has it to do with the lyrics? This questioning is reinforced by the camera never resting on one object long enough for us to focus our thoughts (and get bored); fast cutting obscures the scene as a whole, it flashes past us in fragments.

If this is applied to fantasy films, what we would have are not films that awe us and then bore us, but films that would produce an intensity of image that matched the content. Obvious films in this area would be Godard's *Alphaville* or David Lynch's *Eraserhead*, as both deny complacency. If we look at the blockbusters then there are few films that come to mind. Pop video directors have curiously cited such films as *Blade Runner* and *Alien* as inspiring

homage to the Saturday morning serials, and are a perfection of the classic Hollywood text, ie, a seamless narrative which moves from a point of tranquility, through turmoil, to resolution in the last reel. The technical devices of these films also conspire to hide their own construction; for example, one does not notice the individual edits in a scene, which follow the logical progression of the script.

In these films, no matter how fantastic the plot, the characters or the scene, in the final analysis we are left with a very standard film. Pop videos, on the other hand, avoid a seamless, smooth world. Their logic is the rhythm of the musical track, which dictates the cutting, the timing and the construction of the film as well as suggesting the possible content. It would be difficult to say whether all the pop video makers have come from art school backgrounds, but it is interesting to see that many of the formal devices used in pop videos are those that were explored by avant garde filmmakers. These would include techniques like the jump cut, repeating the action, slow zooms and non-narrative construction, which in part were designed to make people aware of the construction of the film. These have been transferred effectively to pop videos, but when they were used in avant garde films, such as those of Jean-Luc Godard and Michael Snow, their appeal was only to a minority film elite; their mass appeal being their ability to send the audience asleep or screaming out of the theatre.

IT AIN'T IMPLICITLY SO

There seems to be two reasons why the music-visual mix works in pop videos. One is obviously because the music dominates. The second is that, on the whole, the images are abstract. If they are linked to a narrative, it is not linear and often runs tangential to the meaning in the lyrics, ie, something



Top and Below: Ridley Scott dazzles again, focussing on imagery and energy in Blade Runner. Above: The troubled Henry from David Lynch's hallucinatory Eraserhead.

them. Yet both attempt to create a believable alien environment, instead of just presenting us with one. At the end of all this we are left with the question, will we see fantasy films develop into the area outlined above. I feel that the answer is yes, for as the budgets get smaller, the ingenuity will increase. There is a pool of trained talent waiting to be tapped. As someone said, "keep watching the skies".

Talking HEAD

He looks like a refugee from This Island Earth as conceived by Gerry Anderson. His computer-generated jokes are delivered with style and an infectious speech impediment. He shows good taste in rock/pop videos. He answers to the name of Max Headroom, and he's clearly destined for cultthood. Annabel Jankel, one half of his directing team, talked to Starburst about what makes Max Headroom ttt-tick. . .

Interview by Richard Ashford and Cefn Ridout.

Starburst: Did the Max Headroom pilot happen first, or did the idea of packaging the rock videos in some format come first?

Annabel Jankel: Well, what happened was that Andy Park, who was the commissioning editor for music at Channel 4, was interested in showing music and raising the consciousness of TV viewers into accepting music on a more visual basis. This was about three years ago, when music, actually rock videos, were a lot more inventive. There was some good stuff happening, which is unlike now when most of it is pretty dull. Andy felt that it was a terrible situation, in that there were these brilliant videos being made, but there was no real and consistent means of air time for them. So he approached Peter Wagg, who was the head of videos at Chrysalis, who replied that they already wanted to produce something for Channel 4.

Peter Wagg then approached us, that's Rocky (Morton) and myself, to discuss the format of these shows, and whether we would be interested in designing and developing the idea. We then started to discuss the whole notion with George Stone, who is a writer, and at that stage we were just thinking about linking videos. But



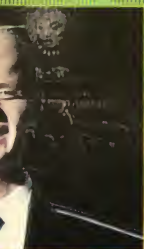
it was all very unsatisfactory, and just didn't feel right. We tried all sorts of ideas with graphics and other visual ideas, but at the end of the day we felt that you just have to have a host. We were very keen on featuring a real person, but somebody who was not quite so run of the mill. So we came up with this idea of a computer-generated host called Max Headroom, which really excited us. We talked the idea over with Andy Park, who was also very enthusiastic, and asked us how Max Headroom became the host of the video show. We already knew, because we saw him entirely developed in our minds.

How did you develop the character? Was it the fact that you needed a host, and so you came up with a name like Max Headroom? Or did you come up with the origin first?

No, to go back even further, George Stone, who has since left the project, came up with the idea of the Max Headroom Show. Then

Break for station identification - The Max Headroom Show. Max's special guests (l-r) are Powerstation, Queen, The Tom Tom Club, Ozzy Osborne, Billy Idol, Debbie Harry and those guys who can't Stop Making Sense, Talking Heads. Heere's Max. . .







we subsequently developed it. We were keen to have a real person, although computer-generated and somehow synthetic, to be the host. Having the name of the show, we then worked backwards with George, developing this entire story as to how he came to be called Max Headroom. And as you saw on the film, the last thing Edison Carter, the reporter, sees is the barrier with Maximum Headroom on it, which he crashes into. So he names himself Max Headroom.

It was an inspired pun worked backwards.

Yes, and it became more and more convoluted, because the more we thought about Max, the more his world developed. And in the process, more of our ideas, especially our paranoid ones and gripes, were worked into it. It didn't start from a pre-conceived idea, it just started from something completely visual and developed from there. ... not backwards so much as three dimensionally around the name.

So why was the pilot so devoid of videos?

That is also quite interesting. You are asking all the sorts of questions that actually took a year to iron out, which were basically logistical problems. What we intended to do at the very beginning was tell the Max Headroom story week by week in amongst the shows, so that in between every video there would be something like 30 seconds of regular Max Headroom fictional narratives. We did an experiment where we actually cut up a *Twilight Zone* episode and interspersed it with a whole bunch of rock videos, but the end result wasn't particularly satisfying. In one half hour show you couldn't hold your audience, because you not only saw these videos which were fast paced and highly visual, but you also had this punctuated by a much slower, regular paced piece of narrative. The big problem was that you have to expect your audience to stay with you for thirteen weeks to get one hour of story.

To make matters worse, if you remember the film, Max Headroom doesn't actually become Max Headroom until two thirds of the way through the story, so we have a terrible chronological problem as well. How do we show Max introducing pop promos in the present, when the story is set in the future, and he'd be talking about the past? The solution seemed to be simply presenting a video programme on British TV which shows solely rock videos, introduced by this out of the ordinary host. The host's origin would be a separate idea. The more we tried to put them together, the more each idea compromised each other, so we decided to draw a really positive line through the two to keep the story as the story and the shows as the shows. Thus the story was kept on film and the shows on video, so that they're separate ideas, and the only thing they have in common is Max Headroom.



Left, above and far right: Crusading reporter Edison Carter (Matt Frewer) and Theora Jones (Amanda Pays).

So there's no narrative development in the shows? We'll not be seeing any of the characters that were introduced in the pilot?

No, which is sad as far as everybody is concerned, because everybody wants to know what's happened to the dreadful opportunists and crooks and all sorts, but the film was obviously a much more involved piece of production and cost a lot more. Everybody says, 'it would be great to have another 13 half hours of the Max Headroom film'. But it would be a massive production. It would be great to do, and certainly the financiers would make noises, but it would have to be something that would be developed at a later stage.

Was there any spontaneity lost because there was a three-year gestation period?

It didn't really take three years. We were only working on it full-time for the last six months. We actually didn't have the finished script until a month before shooting, which was done last November. So that whole part of the production was put together very, very quickly. What took three years is the ongoing idea of a music video series, which has never been done on British TV before. ... there's all sorts of legal aspects involving unions, record companies and the like when putting together a video show.

The history of videos in Britain seems to be as a source of cheap programming, slotting them in on Breakfast TV. In the *Max Headroom* pilot, there was a scene in the "Big Time" van where a jibe was made about broadcasting videos because they were cheap, because they were freebies. That's right.

Is the *Max Headroom* Show a sort of free ride in that sense?

No, ironically enough that jibe relates to one of our personal gripes. We get a production fee to make the videos, and often go into our own finances to finish them the way we want them to be. Ye they are trying to be sold over the counter and everybody seems to make a profit out of these films except the filmmakers. The problem is that videos aren't a cheap source of free programming any longer, certainly not the *Max Headroom* Shows, they're all being paid for. There's also all sorts of problems with clearances from the record companies. But the whole point about the *Max Headroom* Show is that it's showcasing, for the first time, a really good selection of music videos.

What is your criteria for selection?

Well, the programme doesn't limit itself to any age group or any decade of music. All it is set out to do is just not be boring, which most current rock videos are.

So is there more emphasis placed on the visual than on the music track?

It's equal, really. What we're showing isn't a radio show. It isn't Max just talking and playing music. We feel very strongly about putting visuals to music because our whole background is so music orientated. Often there are the most appallingly wasted opportunities with quite brilliant records, where the videos are truly ghastly.

On the other hand, there are some truly appalling records made which use brilliant visuals. It's very difficult to be able to look at something and say this isn't right and this is. The video's got to be sympathetic to the music... you can't suddenly put a whole bunch of meaningless images to a song and expect an audience to watch it and accept it. Sadly, audiences will accept an awful lot, but there are some good videos and there are hopefully some still being made, but I think it's difficult to say what is the criteria.

Have you made a selection for the whole series?

No, because we're hoping that week by week the record companies will be forthcoming with all the new releases. Each week we're showing videos from the seventies and the eighties, and hopefully, in the future, some videos from... well, when I say videos, they wouldn't all be videos of course, it's just a kind of generic term that has developed for any music presented visually. We certainly want to use material from the thirties jazz days and further back.

How positive has the response been from the record companies toward the show?

I think everybody was just sitting around waiting to see what was going to happen, and there had been an awful lot of press coverage about *Max Headroom* anyway... but no one had actually seen the show. Now that the film has been aired, everybody knows who the character is, and that as a video jockey he's genuinely interested in putting on good videos. So now that the record companies have realised that, which many have, they've responded quite brilliantly.

Okay, so Max does come over as vaguely cynical... as a character he dislikes videos and the whole youth culture thing, but he is only just getting the hang of being a VJ, and we intend to develop his personality as the series progresses. At the moment what he really enjoys is having his own show, which allows him to comment on all sort of 'serious' issues.

Max certainly has been given fast and funny dialogue. There was a different writer for the pilot film, wasn't there?

Yes, but the writers on the shows wrote Max's dialogue in the film. The writer on the film was Steve Roberts, and for the show there's Paul Owen, David Hansen and Tim and Jo John.

Could you talk a little about your credits prior to *Max*?



Yeah, sure. This is Rocky and myself's first film that involves narrative fiction and dialogue. However, we've always wanted to move into this area. Before *Max* we did quite a few commercials, pop promos and title sequences, for example for *The Tube*, and short films. Most recently we did a 'Quattro' drink commercial and a 'New Man' commercial for TV.

Which pop videos have you directed?

Well, we've always tended to do videos for artists that aren't entirely mainstream. But in the past we have done videos for the Tom

Tom Club's 'Genius of Love' and 'Pleasure of Love', Donald Fagen's 'New Frontier'... we did one for Nick Heyward a while ago, one for Rush, Elvis Costello's 'Accidents Will Happen'... and the last one we shot was for Miles Davis in New York.

The look of the pilot film was also very reminiscent of the harsh sort of future depicted in *Mad Max* and *Blade Runner*. Was this...

We certainly didn't set out to make something "in the style of..." but we are great admirers of Ridley Scott's work, and great fans of *Mad Max*. I suppose we're the ideal members of the audience to appreciate that type of filmmaking with a good story.

They are highly visual and sharply edited...

Yeah, and the stories are really very brutal, with a kind of unsentimental edge.

As time is running out, I wonder if you could talk a little about the special effects. Especially how *Max* is created.

Well, there are all sorts of various stages... all the computer graphics in the film are actually generated on a computer.

In *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* all the computer graphics were actually normal rostrum animation.

Well, in the film what you'd expect to be computer animation is just that. The rest is just basically rostrum shot material, although

you may think it's computer graphics. As for *Max Headroom*, he does start off as Frewer, and there's all sorts of animation techniques and prosthetics, and video and computer effects which finally create *Max Headroom*.

Do you have any plans to take *Max Headroom* beyond the first 13 episodes?

Well, we're hoping that he might get a slot on the *Terry Wogan* Show. If he makes the *Terry Wogan* Show he'll be very happy. He'll have finally met his match. ■

FANTASY FILM CHART 1985

Back by popular demand, the chart you're all been waiting for! An update of the top 300—yes 300!—grossing fantasy films of all time!

Compiled by Tony Crawley

With 40 new titles this year (not all new films, but new or revived entries) for the first time the Fantasy Chart encompasses the top 300 movies in our genre.

Don't take any of these figures too seriously. Hollywood doesn't! The movie business is more crooked than most. Box-office takings can be inflated for all manner of reasons; because the annual meeting is next week, to get a better price from TV or video sales, to boost some star or executive's ego, or to just make the other fella feel he's doing badly. No company likes to admit failure; hence we'll probably never know the true result of the *Octopussy* vs *Never Say Never Again* battle. The real truth is known only to America's Internal Revenue Service—the tax man. And then not all of it... which is another reason for those huge publicity budgets. They eat into profits, which means less tax to pay!

Variety's figures (each film's rentals, the loot due to the distributor... and just try collecting yours if you're on a percentage!) are, then a rough guide as to how movies went down with the public in America and Canada. Though I'd love to collate our chart from world box-office returns, correctly updated and then put through the inflation-related wringer, I doubt much would change. Give or take a placing, this is our Top 300.

NEW ENTRIES IN ITALICS. LAST YEAR'S POSITIONS IN BRACKETS.

STILL UNDEFEATED CHAMPION!

1(1) **E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL**/Steven Spielberg/1982. Untouchable! Bound to remain so, too, due to its imminent re-issue. Rental figures slightly re-computed from last year, but still the first—only—film in history to leap the \$200m. barrier to... \$209,976,989

REST OF THE TOP FIVE (NO CHANGE)

2(2) **STAR WARS**/George Lucas/1977. Close. Not close enough. About a galaxy away, though if Lucasfilm issued all re-run earnings...? \$193,500,000
3(3) **RETURN OF THE JEDI**/Richard Marquand/1983. Just an Ewok's whisker behind and it's out again in America today; tomorrow the world. \$165,000,000
4(4) **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**/Irvin Kershner/1980. The middle chapter is always the toughest; no matter, all three have broken through the once impossible \$100m. barrier. \$141,600,000
5(5) **JAWS**/Steven Spielberg/1975. Clinging on by a fin as the golden oldie of the upper fifth; into the lower ten next time, for sure. \$129,961,081

REST OF THE TOP TEN

6(—) **GHOSTBUSTERS**/Ivan Reitman/1984. Surprise blitzkrieg of last year; wasn't that good, but buried both Indy films and is out again come the summer. \$127,000,000
7(6) **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK**/Steven Spielberg/1981. But No. 1. in video. The only movie selling a million-plus tapes. \$115,598,000
8(—) **INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM**/Steven Spielberg/1984. Yeah, trounced by the first, except abroad where US censor-hassles didn't hurt it—only St Steven's record of three (now two) in top six. \$109,000,000
9(7) **THE EXORCIST**/William Friedkin/1973. Still hanging in there, dropping to 11th in history after *Grease*, *Tootsie*. \$89,000,000
10(9) **SUPERMAN**/Richard Donner/1978. About to fly out of the ten, unlucky 13th in history after *The Godfather*, oddly one place higher than last year due to revised CE3K figures. \$82,800,000
11(8) **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**/Steven Spielberg/1977/82... from both.
12(—) **GREMLINS**/Joe Dante/1984/Mowgli's now 16th in history after *Sound of Music*.
13(10) **SUPERMAN II**/Richard Lester/1981/85. 1m/in need of a phone-booth...
14(11) **STAR TREK**/Robert Wise/1979/56m, hanging in by its ears!
15(12) **JAWS II**/Jeannot Szwarc/1978/52.4m/minus the maestro's touch.
16(13) **THE TOWERING INFERNO**/John Guillermin/1975/52m the fire's not out yet.
17(14) **AIRPORT**/George Seaton/1970/45.2m/flying higher than the rest of series.
18(16) **THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE**/Ronald Neame/1972/42m/not all ships are in space
19(17) **SNOW WHITE**/animation/1973/41.4m/Disney's biggest...
20(18) **AIRPLANE!**/Jim Abrahams, David & Jerry Zucker/1980/40.6m/started comedy hits.

AND ON TO THE FIFTY WHY NOT?

21(15) **ALIEN**/Ridley Scott/1979/lowering figures to 40.3m/but it's coming soon!
22(19) **STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN**/Nicholas Meyer/1982/wonderful in its 40m. wrath.
23(—) **STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK**/Leonard Nimoy/1984/a 39m. earful.
24(20) **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**/Mel Brooks/1975/38.8m/moral: direct, Mel, don't act!
25(23) **WARGAMES**/John Badham/1983/36.6m according to my computer.
26(21) **POLTERGEIST**/Tobe Hooper ('tis said)/1982/37.7m is the target for II.
27(24) **SUPERMAN III**/Richard Lester/1983/37.2m/but if they'd hired Eddie Murphy...?
28(22) **KING KONG**/John Guillermin/1976/36.9m/at least it gave us Jessica!
29(—) **ROMANCING THE STONE**/Robert Zemeckis/1984/36m./for Indy II; better in Europe.
30(25) **EARTHQUAKE**/Mark Robson/1974/35.9m/anyone actually remember it?
31(26) **THE AMITYVILLE HORROR**/Stuart Rosenberg/1979/house for sale, only 35m!
32(28) **OCTOPUSSY**/John Glen/1983/top Bond at 34m, beating Sean's return (in USA).
33(—) **SPLASH**/Ron Howard/1984/Disney's biggest newbie, just \$24,000 behind 007.
34(27) **MOONRAKER**/Lewis Gilbert/1979/33.9m/*Beverly Hills Cop* did 58m. in a month!
35(29) **THE SHINING**/Stanley Kubrick/1980/top Steve King clank at 30.9m, Dino!
36(—) **PINOCCHIO**/animation 1940/30.4m/charted by readers' demand and why not.
37(30) **THE OMEN**/Richard Donner/1976/28.5m/beats both sequels—combined.
38(32) **BAMBI**/animation 1942/the re-issue lifted it to 28.4m.
39(39) **NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN**/Irvin Kershner/1983/28m/beat *Octopussy* in world?
40(31) **THUNDERBALL**/Terence Young/1965/figures lowered to 26.9m, wonder why?!
41(34) **JAWS 3D**/Joe Alves/1983/cost 16m, made 26.7m; flop; but top 3-D film.
42(33) **FOR YOUR EYES ONLY**/John Glen/1981/26.5m/no big deal (like the film).

- 43 (36) **AIRPORT** 1975/Jack Smight/1975/25.5m/after than Airplane.
 44 (37) **THE BLACK HOLE**/Gary Nelson/1979/25.4m/Disney's out of the black hole now.
 45 (35) **THE CHINA SYNDROME**/James Bridges/1979/25.3m/sf = science fact; and how!
 46 (84) **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW**/Jim Sharman/1975/someone's computed those midnight takes.
 47 (38) **FIREFOX**/Clint Eastwood/1982/25m. is low for Clint, but beats Gandhi.
 48 (40) **POPEYE**/Robert Altman/1980/24.5m/needed more spinnach.
 49 (41) **PETER PAN**/animation 1953/24.4m/wait till Spielberg gets flying...
 50 (48) **FANTASIA**/animation 1940/more re-issues make it reach 24.3m.

CAN YOU FACE THE REST OF... TOP HUNDRED?

- 51 (42) **THE SPY WHO LOVED ME**/Lewis Gilbert/1977/24.3m/had the wrong Jaws.
 52 (43) **2001**/Stanley Kubrick/1968/24.1m/about the cost of 20/01
 53 (45) **THE DARK CRYSTAL**/Jim Henson, Frank Oz/1982/23.5m, but it cost 28m. Jim's preparing a sequel called *Labyrinth*...
 54 (44) **1941**/Steven Spielberg/1979/23.4m/he keeps talking re-issue but...
 55 (41) **GREYSTOKE: THE LEGEND OF TARZAN, LORD OF THE APES**/Hugh Hudson/1984/23m/makes 1941 look rather better, huh?
 56 (47) **GOLDFINGER**/Guy Hamilton/1964/22.9m dollars and Pussy Galore.
 57 (46) **THE BARBARIAN**/John Milius/1982/destroying the sequel at 22.5m.
 58 (49) **BLUE THUNDER**/John Badham/1983/21.9m/died as fast as the TV rip-off.
 59 (50) **LOVE AT FIRST BITE**/Stan Dragoti/1979/20.5m/the biter bit, by George!
 60 (-) **2010**/Peter Hyams/1984/18th in US year with 20m. in four weeks, will beat 2007 in all but class.
 61 (51) **DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER**/Guy Hamilton/1971/19.7m/Sean beats *West Side Story*.
 62 (52) **YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE**/Lewis Gilbert/1967/19.3m/... and Bongo-san, too.
 63 (53) **HIGH ANXIETY**/Mel Brooks/1977/19.1m/see what I mean, Mel?
 64 (54) **TIME BANDITS**/Terry Gilliam/1981/18.9m/even humbled *Blade Runner*.
 65 (55) **HALLOWEEN**/John Carpenter/1978/18.5m/JC's biggest and it's six years old...
 66 (63) **PETE'S DRAGON**/Don Chaffey/1977/up to 18.4m 'cos it's called Elliott?
 67 (-) **SILKWOOD**/Mike Nichols/1983/17.8m/more science fact and it beat...
 68 (56) **CLASH OF THE TITANS**/Desmond Davis/1981/17.4m/sells better on video.
 69 (57) **FRIDAY THE 13th**/Sean Cunningham/1980/17.1m/no (publishable) comment.
 70 (58) **EXCALIBUR**/John Boorman/1981/17.1m/*Sexcalibur* sells better on tape!
 71 (59) **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**/Stanley Kubrick/1971/17m/prophetic parable.
 72 (-) **THE TERMINATOR**/James Cameron/1984/25th for US year at 7m, hence a sequel...
 73 (60) **TRON**/Stephen Lisberger/1982/16.7m/game over for Lisberger?
 74 (61) **FRIDAY THE 13 - PART 3(D)**/Steve Miner/1982/16.5m/more than *Last Tango*
 75 (65) **TWILIGHT ZONE - THE MOVIE**/Landis. Spielberg, Dante, Miller/1983/16m/Four stories for the price of one.
 76 (-) **FRIDAY THE 13th - THE FINAL CHAPTER**/Joseph Zito/1984/16m/but not the end...
 77 (67) **LIVE AND LET DIE**/Guy Hamilton/1973/15.9m/enter Roger Morigue.
 78 (66) **TARZAN, THE APE MAN**/John Derek/1981/15.89m/*Greystoke* beat it.
 79 (63) **PSYCHO**/Richard Franklin/1983/15.8m/4.6m. more than *Psycho* except in inflation-related terms.
 80 (69) **HIGH ROAD TO CHINA**/Brian G. Hutton/1983/15.5m/Selleck more like Louisiana Jones than Indiana.
 81 (63) **FLASH GORDON**/Mike Hodges/1960/15.4m/*Dune* did that in five weeks.
 82 (62) **AIRPORT '77**/Jerry Jameson/1977/revised to 15.2m for Lemmon fizz.
 83 (69) **PLANET OF THE APES**/Franklin J. Schaffner/1968/15m/in the beginning...
 83 (69) **ROSEMARY'S BABY**/Roman Polanski/1968/15m/Polanski's working this year.
 83 (69) **CARRIE**/Brian De Palma/1976/15m/will he ever match this one again?
 83 (69) **DRESSED TO KILL**/Brian De Palma/1980/15m/this wasn't it.
 87 (74) **BLADE RUNNER**/Ridley Scott/1982/14.8m/the unkindest cut of all.

- 88 (75) **COMA**/Michael Crichton/1978/14.5m/just when you thought it safe to snooze.
 89 (-) **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**/Tobe Hooper/1974/14.22m/about time it got in.
 90 (78) **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**/Ralph Bakshi/1978/14.1m/where's Bakshi now?
 91 (76) **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**/John Landis 1981/14m/*Thriller*'s Dad.
 92 (-) **DUNE**/David Lynch/1984/just starting with 14m. in a month.
 93 (77) **EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC**/John Boorman/1977/13.9m/the absolute pits!
 94 (-) **CONAN THE DESTROYER**/Richard Fleischer/1984/13.7m/terminated, no?
 95 (80) **ALTERED STATES**/Ken Russell/1980/12.5m/alterd too much in SPFX states.
 96 (81) **CHARIOTS OF THE GODS**/Harold Reini/1973/12.46m/sing low, sing sweet...
 97 (-) **THE LAST STARFIGHTER**/Nick Castle/1984/12.41m/not bad for six months.
 98 (83) **QUEST FOR FIRE**/Jean-Jacques Annaud/1982/12.25m/a gem: JJ's working again.
 99 (79) **OMEN II: DAMIEN**/Don Taylor/1978/rejigged to 12.1m/omenous warning.
 100 (87) **HALLOWEEN II**/Rick Rosenthal/1981/12m/bettered the boss' *Thing*.

INTO THE NEXT CENTURY!

- 101 (88) **THE ELEPHANT MAN**/David Lynch/1980/12.01m/the film that got him *Dune*.
 102 (90) **CAPRICORN ONE**/Peter Hyams/1978/12m/the one that got him *2010*.
 103 (91) **BEYOND AND BACK**/James L. Conway/1978/11.7m/there is life after death!
 104 (94) **AIRPLANE II: THE SEQUEL**/Ken Finkleman/1982/11.34m/crashed on take-off.
 105 (92) **GHOST STORY**/John Irvin/1981/11.31m/showcase for Dick Smith's make-up.
 106 (95) **MAD MAX II**/George Miller/1982/11.3m/ready for *Max III*?
 107 (96) **20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**/Richard Fleischer/1954/11.26m/*Jaws*' Mum.
 108 (97) **PSYCHO**/Alfred Hitchcock/1960/11.2m/mother 'n' father of all showers...
 109 (88) **BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25th CENTURY**/Daniel Haller/11.16m/top tele-movie.
 110 (98) **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS**/Philip Kaufman/1978/11.13m/pod off!
 111 (85) **THE FURY**/Brian De Palma/1978/11.1m/not that consistent; *Scarface* hit 23m.
 112 (99) **THE FOG**/John Carpenter/1980/11m/but when will John's foglight?
 112 (100) **THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER**/Albert Pyun/1982/11m/from Albert...who?
 114 (101) **MYSTERIOUS MONSTERS**/R. Guenette 1975/10.96m/the joker in the pack.
 115 (81) **DRACULA**/John Badham/1979/revised to 10.9m/fangs for the memory.
 116 (102) **ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK**/John Carpenter/1981/10.9m/Lotsa style, no appeal?
 117 (93) **WHEN A STRANGER CALLS**/Fred Walton/1979/down to 10.82m/*hang up!*
 118 (103) **THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE**/Richard Friedenberg/1978/10.8m/two jokers, then: *Starlighter*'s Nick Castle sending this up as *Stranger Than Weird*.
 119 (104) **HEAVY METAL**/Gerald Potterton/1981/10.6m/sequel via video-clippers.
 120 (105) **MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN**/Terry Jones/1979/10.5m/Monty's biggest.
 121 (107) **PROPHECY**/John Frankenheimer/1979/10.49m/forget the 10, more like 1949.
 122 (108) **SWORD IN THE STONE**/Wolf Reitherman/1963/10.45m/way behind *Excalibur*.
 123 (160) **THE RIGHT STUFF**/Philip Kaufman/1983/10.3m, cost 27m; real science facts of life.
 124 (109) **CASINO ROYALE**/Guest, Hughes, Hustin, McGrath, Parnish/1967/10.2m/the Bond that got away from everyone!

- 125 (-) **THE NEVERENDING STORY**/Wolfgang Petersen/1984/10.1m/call it 'The Big Sleep'.
- 126 (105) **THE THING**/John Carpenter/1982/10.017m/Bright pupil, but must try harder.
- 127 (86) **THE FINAL CONFLICT**/Graham Baker/1981/10m/Omen III's figures droptio 10m.
- 127 (110) **OUTLAND**/Peter Hyams/1981/10m/High Moon but 2010 saves Pete's act.
- 127 (110) **CREEPSHOW**/George Romero/1982/10m/major flop, but sequel still due.
- 127 (-) **STARMAN**/John Carpenter/1984/10m in one month, could boost John's star.
- 131 (111) **FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE**/Terence Young/1964/9.8m/when they were great!
- 131 (141) **REAR WINDOW**/Alfred Hitchcock/1964/9.8m/re-issues work!
- 134 (112) **THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN**/Joe Schumacher/1981/9.506m/small fry.
- 135 (114) **ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN**/John Hough/1975/9.5m/bewitched, bothered and...
- 135 (115) **LOGAN'S RUN**/Michael Anderson/1976/9.5m/jogging, more like it.
- 135 (116) **FRIDAY THE 13th II**/Steve Miner/1981/9.5m/very minor stuff.
- 138 (118) **ORCA**/Michael Anderson/1977/9.43m/despite Bo Derek...
- 139 (118) **THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN**/Guy Hamilton/1974/9.4m/hew was Chris Lee.
- 140 (119) **WILLARD**/Delbart Mann/1971/9.3m/you dirty rat!
- 141 (-) **CHRISTINE**/John Carpenter/1983/9.16m/yes, very much harder!
- 142 (120) **ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE**/Peter Hunt/1969/9.1m/Big Fry.
- 143 (121) **ROLLERBALL**/Norman Jewison/1975/9m/just not Norman's genre.
- 144 (123) **THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH**/Robert Amram/1977/8.8m/don't bother...
- 145 (126) **KRULL**/Peter Yates/1983/8.65m/told you so; Yates should stick to what he knows best.
- 146 (125) **BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES**/Ted Post/1970/8.6m/chapter two.
- 147 (127) **THE CAT FROM OUTER SPACE**/Norman Tokar/1978/8.47m/here KETy.KETy!
- 148 (128) **THE HOWLING**/Joe Dante/1981/8.4m/70m more when Joe's Amblin.
- 149 (124) **THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN**/Robert Wise/1971/8.35m/strain is right!
- 150 (129) **DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE**/Robert Stevenson/1959/8.3m/Spielberg loves it, Connery's in it; long overdue for a re-issue.
- 151 (131) **THE DEAD ZONE**/David Cronenberg/1983/8.15m/his best...due to Dino!
- 152 (132) **SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE**/Lamont Johnson/1983/8.13m/3D flop.
- 153 (133) **SLEEPER**/Woody Allen/1973/8.055m/a literal sleeper when Woody was awake.
- 154 (134) **BLOW OUT**/Brian De Palma/1981/8m/why is this man working?
- 155 (135) **SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER**/Sam Wanamaker/1977/7.93m/Rocky's pet?
- 156 (135) **SILENT SCREAM**/Denny Harris/1979/7.9m/Enter: Barbara Steele.
- 157 (137) **THE SWARM**/Irwin Allen/1978/7.7m/a real 'bee'-movie.
- 158 (139) **GRIZZLY**/William C. Girdler/1976/7.5m/Jaws mitpaws.
- 159 (140) **RETURN FROM WITCH MOUNTAIN**/John Hough/1978/7.39m/Drac vs. Baby Jane.
- 160 (138) **FAMILY PLOT**/Alfred Hitchcock/1976/7.35m/The Master's adieu.
- 161 (122) **AIRPORT '80 - THE CONCORDE**/David Lowell Rich/1979/7.33m/big nose.
- 162 (-) **FIRESTARTER**/Mark L. Lester/1984/7.32m/burnt out case.
- 163 (146) **HALLOWEEN II: SEASON OF THE WITCH**/Tommy Lee Wallace/1982/7.31m/owch!
- 164 (-) **NIGHT OF THE COMET**/Tom Eberhardt/1984/7.3m/doing better in two months than *Dreamscape* in five!
- 165 (142) **BEYOND THE DOOR**/Oliver Hellman/1975/7.14m/lock it...fast!
- 166 (143) **IT'S ALIVE!**/Larry Cohen/1977/7.1m/just not lively enough.
- 167 (147) **MONTY PYTHON'S MEANING OF LIFE**/Terry Jones/1983/7.04m/Brian's livelier.
- 168 (145) **WESTWORLD**/Michael Crichton/1973/7m/Yul Brynner plays Threepio.
- 169 (-) **CHILDREN OF THE CORN**/Fritz Kiersch/1984/6.9m/far from corny.
- 170 (149) **RAISE THE TITANIC**/Jerry Jameson/1980/6.8m/let it be.
- 170 (149) **DRAGONSLAYER**/Matthew Robbins/1981/6.8m/no slaymate of the month.
- 172 (151) **THE FINAL COUNTDOWN**/Don Taylor/1980/6.7m/Martin Sheen, no shine!
- 173 (148) **FRENZY**/Alfred Hitchcock/1972/6.6m/his last made-in-Britain.
- 174 (152) **ABOUT TIME**/Nicholas Meyer/1979/6.5m/The Ripper vs. H.G. Wells.
- 175 (156) **THE ENTITY**/Sidney J. Furis/1983/6.5m/a kind of Hersheybra...
- 176 (153) **ZELIG**/Woody Allen/1983/6.5m/his Woody's splintered.
- 176 (154) **NORTH BY NORTHWEST**/Alfred Hitchcock/1959/6.4m/funny, that plane's crop-dusting where there ain't no crops...
- 178 (130) **VISITING HOURS**/Jean-Claude Lord/1982/6.4m/carry on Shatter.
- 178 (144) **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA**/Richard Colla/1978/6.39m/should've stayed on TV.
- 180 (155) **DR. NO**/Terence Young/1962/6.35m/what about all the re-runs, Cubby?
- 181 (156) **PHANTASM**/Don Coscarelli/1979/6.2m/anyone understand this one?
- 182 (156) **SCANNERS**/David Cronenberg/1981/6.2m/too many panners?
- 182 (168) **THE INCUBUS**/John Hough/1982/6.11m/or take the incu-train instead.
- 184 (159) **THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY**/William Wellman/1954/6.1m/Airport's Pa!
- 185 (160) **THE HOUSE OF WAX**/Andre de Toth/1953/6m/they don't make 'em like they used to...
- 186 (160) **METEOR**/Ronald Neame/1979/6m/Sean 'n' sludge.
- 186 (160) **PROM NIGHT**/Paul Lynch/1980/6m/why Jamie Lee quit the genre.
- 186 (160) **AMITYVILLE II: THE POSSESSION**/Damiano Damiani/1982/6m for this house.
- 186 (-) **ICE PRATES**/Stewart Raffill/1984/6m/frozed ab-so-lutely stiff!
- 186 (-) **SUPERGIRL**/Jeannot Szwarc/1984/6m/in two months, doesn't look good.
- 186 (165) **RACE WITH THE DEVIL**/Jack Starrett/1975/5.8m/you Fonda satanists?
- 186 (166) **HANGAR 18**/James L. Conway/1980/5.79m/UFOs - the wrong way.
- 193 (-) **DREAMSCAPE**/Joe Ruben/1984/5.7m/more of a nightmare, excepting Kate.
- 194 (167) **ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES**/Don Taylor/1971/5.56m/chapter three.
- 195 (169) **FANTASTIC VOYAGE**/Richard Fleischer/1966/5.5m/Raquel's guide to the body.
- 196 (169) **BARBARELLA**/Roger Vadim/1968/5.5m/Jane's Fonda pin-ups. Or she was.
- 196 (-) **VERTIGO**/Alfred Hitchcock/1958/5.3m/more than De Palma's rips in real money.
- 198 (156) **FLESH GORDON**/Howard Ziehm/1974/5.3m/preferable to Dino's version.
- 198 (175) **THE CHANGELING**/Peter Medak/1980/5.3m/great Scott, by George.
- 200 (167) **HERO AT LARGE**/Martin Davidson/1980/5.3m/Captain Avenger lives...

NOT FOUND YOUR FAVOURITE YET? YOU WILL - THERE'S MORE...

- 201 (176) **THE SECRET OF NIMH**/Don Bluth/1982/5.27m/so, into video-games...
- 202 (178) **DEATH RACE 2000**/Paul Bartel/1975/5.25m/which makes it eat *Raoul*.
- 203 (177) **THE LEGACY**/Richard Marquand/1979/5.22m/better than 84's *Until September* (1.6m).
- 204 (169) **CAT PEOPLE**/Paul Schrader/1982/5.21m/Nasty Kinski's last flop.
- 205 (179) **MONTY PYTHON & THE HOLY GRAIL**/Terry Gilliam & Jones/1975/5.17m/ace!
- 206 (181) **THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD**/Gordon Hessler/1974/5.15m/stop-motion fantasy.
- 207 (181) **MANIAC**/William Lustig/1981/5.1m/not one for Auntie Vi.
- 208 (183) **THE BEASTMASTER**/Don Coscarelli/1982/5.03m/The Vegetarian' bites \$5,090,653.
- 209 (173) **THE BIRDS**/Alfred Hitchcock/1963/lower flight with new \$5,090,371 tab.
- 210 (182) **SOMEWHERE IN TIME**/Jeannot Szwarc/1980/5.039m/time slipped away...
- 211 (184) **DAMNATION ALLEY**/Jack Smight/1977/5.031m/Hollywood's SF until Lucas.

- 211 (189) **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME**/J. Lee Thompson/1981/5.004m/many bloody returns.
- 213 (186) **DR. STRANGELOVE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB**/Stanley Kubrick/1964/5m/not Reagan's fave flick!
- 213 (195) **KING KONG**/Merian C. Cooper/1963/5m/though how much in today's money?
- 213 (187) **THE RESURRECTION OF PETER PROUD**/J. Lee Thompson/1975/5m/feels.
- 213 (188) **COMIN' AT YA**/Ferdinando Baldi/1981/1.5m/charted for reviving 3D.
- 217 (190) **SATURIN 3**/Stanley Donen/1980/4.9m/Stan should stick to musicals.
- 218 (191) **MOBY DICK**/John Huston/1956/4.8m/Jaws' Poppa.
- 219 (192) **THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK**/Charles B. Pierce/1972/4.8m/for the bog!
- 219 (211) **GALAXY OF TERROR**/B.D. Clark/1980/4.8m/Taeffle O'Connell is slain. (Who?)
- 221 (193) **JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH**/Henry Levin/1959/4.77m/boring.
- 222 (194) **ON THE BEACH**/Stanley Kramer/1959/4.77m/yesterday's *Day After*.
- 223 (195) **FRITZ THE CAT**/Ralph Bakshi/1972/4.7m/a real cool cat.
- 223 (196) **FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN**/Paul Morrissey/1974/4.7m/beautiful 3D.
- 223 (227) **BRAINSTORM**/Douglas Trumbull/1983/4.7m/needed Showscan... or a script.
- 226 (197) **WIZARDS**/Ralph Bakshi/1977/4.65m/sorry Ralphie, wizard it ain't.
- 227 (-) **MAN WITH TWO BRAINS**/Carl Reiner/1983/4.6m/funnier than *Ghostbusters*.
- 228 (198) **THE SENTINEL**/Michael Winner/1977/4.52m/terrible; not terror.
- 229 (199) **CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**/J. Lee Thompson/1972/4.5m/No. 4.
- 229 (204) **GALAXINA**/William Sachs/1980/4.5m/with Dorothy Stratten, aka *Sir 80*.
- 229 (202) **WOLFEN**/Michael Wadleigh/1981/4.5m/Finney's better with volcanos.
- 232 (201) **THE SPACEMAN AND KING ARTHUR**/Russ Mayberry/1979/4.47m/just... goofy!
- 233 (-) **OBSESSION**/Brian De Palma/1976/4.46m/Brian suffers *Vertigo*; again!
- 234 (202) **SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5**/George Roy Hill/1972/4.44m/a gem from the Vonnegut.
- 235 (205) **MAROOINED**/John Sturges/1969/4.35m/right stuff, wrong year; shame.
- 236 (205) **NIGHTMARE**/Romano Scavolini/1981/4.3m/Tom Savini removed his credit.
- 237 (206) **THE AWAKENING**/Mike Newell/1980/4.25m/Chuck Heston's Mummy.
- 238 (207) **THE HOUSE ON SORORITY ROW**/Mark Rosman/1982/4.2m/from a De Palma pupil.
- 239 (208) **THE BAD SEED**/Mervyn LeRoy/1956/4.1m/the kid will kill again on TV soon.
- 240 (222) **HERCULES**/Luigi Cozzi/1983/4.1m/bring back Steve Reeves—quick!
- 241 (209) **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?**/Robert Aldrich/1964/4.05m/everything?
- 242 (210) **BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES**/J. Lee Thompson/1973/4.02m/The End.
- 243 (212) **THE WIZARD OF OZ**/Victor Fleming/1939/4m/and the sequel is coming...
- 243 (213) **THE NUTTY PROFESSOR**/Jerry Lewis/1964/4m/Heston goes ape as last earthlyling.
- 243 (215) **THE STEPFORD WIVES**/Bryan Forbes/1975/4m/new clones for old drones.
- 243 (216) **THE FOOD OF THE GODS**/Bert I. Gordon/1976/4m/hardly *nouvelle cuisine*.
- 243 (217) **FUTUREWORLD**/Richard T. Heffron/1976/4m/Brynner's still Threepio...
- 243 (218) **THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU**/Don Taylor/1977/4m/Logan's Hun'.
- 243 (-) **THE EXTERMINATOR**/James Glenckhaus/1980/4m/blow-torches of the world—ignite!
- 243 (219) **FORBIDDEN WORLD**/Alan Holzman/1982/4m/Corman's alien gets cancer.
- 243 (220) **SORCERESS**/Brian Stuart/1983/4m/Corman's sword 'n' skin 'n' twins.
- 243 (-) **ICEMAN**/Fred Schepisi/1984/but a frozen still at 3.81m.
- 254 (221) **THE FUNHOUSE**/Tobe Hooper/1981/3.8m/lost without Spielberg? We'll see with *Lifeforce* this summer.
- 254 (-) **THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT**/Stewart Raffill/1984/3.8m/even Carpenter productions fail...
- 256 (-) **BODY DOUBLE**/Brian De Palma/1984/3.7m in two months/has *Vertigo* again.
- 257 (223) **MAD MAX (II)**/George Miller/1980/3.5m/well, America dubbed it.
- 257 (224) **TRUCK TRAIN**/Roger Spottiswoode/1980/3.5m/moving on since *Under Fire*.
- 257 (225) **AMITYVILLE 3D**/Richard Fleischer/1983/nobody wants the house, hence 3.5m.
- 260 (-) **A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET**/Wes Craven/1984/moving well at 3.2m in two months.
- 261 (226) **NIGHTMARES**/Joseph Sargent/1983/3.1m/call it *Tweeligh Zone...*
- 262 (228) **FEAR NO EVIL**/Frank La Loggia/1981/3m/Carrie on Living Dead'.
- 262 (229) **HEARTBEATS**/Allan Arkush/1981/3m/thoroughly wasp by Universal.
- 262 (230) **BATTLETRUCK**/Harley Cokiss/1982/3m/ditto by Corman; he called it *Warlords of the 21st Century*; like calling *Splash*, *Fish Fingers*.
- 262 (-) **THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI: ACROSS THE EIGHTH DIMENSION**/W.D. Richter/1984/3m/wasted by...er, no comment at this time.
- 266 (231) **SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES**/Jack Clayton/1983/2.98m/and went.
- 267 (-) **SHEENA**/John Guillermin/1984/2.93m/really atrocious mess!
- 268 (232) **DEADLY BLESSING**/Wes Craven/1981/2.8m/snakes alive—in your bath!
- 268 (233) **METALTRUCK: THE DESTRUCTION OF JARED—SYN**/Charles Band/2.758m/metal breeze.
- 270 (234) **PARASITE**/Charles Band/1982/2.75m/3-D as above, didn't help!
- 271 (235) **DON'T GO IN THE HOUSE**/Joseph Elison/1980/2.69m/incinerating stuff!
- 272 (236) **MY BLOODY VALENTINE**/George Mihalka/1981/2.65m/Coal Miner's Slaughter'.
- 273 (237) **FADE TO BLACK**/Vernon Zimmerman/1980/2.4m worth of mini-classic.
- 274 (238) **THE HEARSE**/George Bowers/1980/2.3m/last ride you'll make...
- 275 (239) **SWAMP THING**/Wes Craven/1982/2.12m/bad for the Craven imagination.
- 276 (240) **THE CHILDREN**/Max Kalmanowicz/2.1m/*Midwich Cuckoos* rip-off.
- 277 (241) **THE HUNGER**/Tony Scott/1983/2.07m/Tony's not Ridley; yet.
- 278 (242) **YOR, THE HUNTER FROM THE FUTURE**/Antonio Margheriti/1983/2.05m...yor blimey!
- 279 (243) **MORTUARY**/Howard Avedis/1983/2.02m/slash 'n' stab 'n' slab.
- 280 (244) **LOOKER**/Michael Crichton/1981/2m/fascinated the French.
- 280 (245) **VENOM**/Piers Haggard/1982/2m/with the other nasty Kinski.
- 280 (246) **TIMEWALKER**/Tom Kennedy/1982/2m/one very angry Mummy.
- 280 (-) **C.H.U.D.**/Douglas Cheek/1984/2m/more Cheek than zap.
- 280 (-) **RUNAWAY**/Michael Crichton/1984/2m/Selleck sinks magnanimously.
- 285 (247) **STUDENT BODIES**/Mickey Rose/1981/1.76m/a send-up from Woody Allen's pal.
- 286 (248) **HE KNOWS YOU'RE ALONE**/Armand Mastroianni/1980/1.75m...in the cinema?
- 288 (250) **THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE**/Bruce Malmuth/1983/1.5m/nor was the audience.
- 288 (-) **SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT**/Charles E. Sellier/1984/1.5m/Santa's sly ride.
- 290 (-) **THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY**/Lucio Fulci/1984/1.4m/creepy, of course.
- 291 (251) **VAMPIRE PLAYGIRLS**/W. Schloss/1980/1.3m/scheer Schloss shock!
- 291 (252) **VIDEODROME**/David Cronenberg/1983/1.3m/saddest news on chart.
- 293 (253) **FINAL EXAM**/Jimmy Hamner/1981/1.2m/don't rush.
- 294 (254) **CATHY'S CURSE**/Eddy Matalon/1980/1.26m/creepy kid from Canada.
- 295 (255) **RESURRECTION**/Daniel Petrie/1980/1.22m/escaped, not released...
- 296 (257) **PIECES**/Juan Piquer Simon/1983/1.18m/chainsawed human jigsaws are fun?
- 297 (258) **THE EVIL DEAD**/Sam Raimi/1983/1.17m/cleaned up in Europe, though.
- 298 (259) **1990: THE BRONX WARRIORS**/Enzo G. Castellari/1983/1.15m/Vic Morrow's penultimate movie.
- 299 (-) **EXTERMINATOR II**/Mark Buntzman/(and William Sachs)
- 1984/1.10m/frying tonight!
- 300 (-) **THE BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET**/John Sayles/1984/1m/oh, brother!

VIDEO »VIEW«

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

Certain video companies seem to deserve endless pats on the back for their services to the fantasy and SF genres (not that their motives are entirely altruistic towards Starburst readers – after all, it's the once-despised genre movie that really packs 'em in nowadays, as in the glorious SF heyday of the Fifties). But it's this magazine's business to hand out the black marks too – and the surprising recipient this month has to be CBS/FOX.

Let's start with the good news. Of the three films in a package that includes John Houston's *Under The Volcano*, the real winner is Sheldon Larry's *Terminal Choice*, a tense medical thriller in the *Coma* vein, with *Hill Street Blues*' Joe Spano. Amidst the ocean of blood pumping over gleaming disinfected surfaces in this taut (if initially confusing) technological whodunnit, director Larry manages to create a fistful of well-rounded and believable characters – there's even the 'Psycho-like' death early on of a very sympathetic major character.

The star of the CBS/FOX package is a doubt bill (on one video) of the Amicus E.C. movies (adapted from the wonderfully ingenious stories of Al Feldstein and Bill Gaines), *Vault of Horror* and *Tales From The Crypt*; but this turns out to be very frustrating for reasons that have nothing to do with the films themselves. Freddie Francis' *Crypt* movie is a treat – sharp, witty and shocking with a beautifully realised cinematic equivalent for the drawing style of such E.C. shock specialists as Johnny Craig (*And All Through The House*, the Craig segment, is masterfully

edited). The follow-up film, Roy Ward Baker's *Vault Of Horror* is far less successful, but has moments of appropriate E.C. grisly wit.

The problem is that CBS/FOX have chosen the heavily cut American TV print of *Vault* for video release. This could, of course, be playing safe in light of the current hysterical prosecutions but I doubt that this movie would have been noticed, the horrific twists to each tale being very brief. To censor them, however, ruins the concise and careful build-up of each episode. A curious method is used here: a freeze frame of some portion of the climax replaces the climax itself. In the case of the *Midnight Mass* sequence, the vampire's sampling of Daniel Massey's blood in the manner of wine-tasters in a cellar becomes incomprehensible when shown as an over-crowded still. Another casualty of the cutting – and probably the most damaged – is the *Neat Job* sequence, where the tongue-in-cheek horror of Glynis Johns' revenge on fussy husband Terry-Thomas is totally ruined by the aforementioned 'still' censorship and a cut in the final pay-off.

PIRATE VIDEO

From M.G.M., Stewart Raffill's *The Ice Pirates* is a film you'll enjoy if you liked *Battle Beyond The Stars* – i.e. a low-budget *Star Wars* that makes up for its reduced finances with an extra shot of inventiveness and clever humour. There's a particular reason for recommending the video issue, as it's slightly longer than the cut version released in the cinema. And in these days of videos that are shorter

than their cinema versions (*Halloween III*, *Videodrome*, *The Dead Zone* et al), that's surely cause for celebration. It almost makes one forgive the re-use of the unconvincing model city from *Logan's Run* (although why anybody should want to resuscitate anything from that movie, I can't imagine).

Robert Ulrich plays the rapscallion hero of the piece with the requisite Errol Fynn swagger (and a mention of the ultimate Swashbuckler hero is very apropos, as *Ice Pirates* owes as much to Warners adventures such as *The Sea Hawk* and *Adventures of Robin Hood* as it does to *Star Wars*) and Mary Crosby, as the tough Princess of the piece shows that an actress can survive appearances in the dread *Dallas*.

WORTH'S WARRIOR

Warrior Of The Lost World (Thorn EMI) has Robert Ginty coasting on his *Exterminator* fame as yet another of *Mad Max*'s vast army of imitators. Ginty's presence was never the reason for *The Exterminator*'s success (anybody could have been behind that flame protection mask!) and the use of his name on various exploitation movies since hasn't saved any of them. This holds true with David Worth's film – although it is one of the better *Max* clones, and it does have Donald Pleasence!



MEDUSA MARCHES ON

Continuing our odyssey through the videos produced by that enterprising company Medusa (which we began last month), there's encouraging



Top: *Mighty men and warrior women* in *Conan the Destroyer* (released on RCA Video). Above: *Hitchcock's The Man Who Knew Too Much* (CIC Video), starring Doris Day and James Stewart.



mention of another Stephen King movie: here's the video issue (courtesy Thorn EMI) of *Firestarter*. *Firestarter* is unquestionably one of King's potboilers, and director Mark Lester, despite an excellent cast (Martin Sheen, George C. Scott, Louise Fletcher) has not managed to transform the author's routine material. Drew Barrymore, as the eponymous psychically gifted child, hasn't got the lines or direction that made her so winning in *E.T.*

ANOTHER HITCH

Disliked by critics when it first appeared in the Fifties, Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (now re-issued in CIC's splendid series of the Master's greatest films) is currently recognised as another in the line of superb films that concluded with *The Birds*. This re-make (with James Stewart and Doris Day) was found slow and ponderous compared to Hitch's earlier British version – and it's possibly true that a little of the dash so winningly evident

in the later *North By Northwest* wouldn't have gone amiss. But we can now see that the tensions in the marriage of the parents of a kidnapped child are just as important to the director as the famous nail-biting climax at a Royal Albert Hall concert; and if Hitch has to take his time with this, it's up to the viewer to perceive his final design. Maybe an audience conditioned to the "shocks every fifteen minutes" syndrome will lose patience – but there are movies that repay close attention, right? Incidentally, that's Bernard Herrmann (Hitchcock's greatest music collaborator) conducting in the aforementioned climactic concert.

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

RCA issues Fleischer's *Conan The Destroyer*. From Precision, Wes Craven's *Invitation To Hell*. CIC has *The Keep*. EIV has *Treasure of Doom* and CBS/FOX the grisly *Walking The Edge*, while Medusa has *Rats: Night*

of *Terror* and *Out Of Control*. The strongest line-up, however, is from Thorn EMI: Leone's masterpiece, *Once Upon A Time In America*, Andrew Davis' *The Final Terror* (with the intriguing team of Darryl Hannah and Rachel Ward) and the Thames video of Nigel Kneale's *The Quatermass Conclusion*. Polygram has a re-issue of one of the great fantasy classics, Michael Powell's *Thief of Bagdad*. On the horizon, Palace has *Company Of Wolves* and *Terror In The Aisles*.

BRIEF NOTICES

Star Trek III: The Search For Spock (CIC) reviewed in the 'brief notices' column, I hear you say? That's because I'm sure that anything I say about this one is almost irrelevant. **Starburst** readers, I predict, will love it and hate it in about the measures they did for the two earlier movies. For what it's worth, I enjoyed it, with reservations. I wasn't too worried by the self-conscious religiosity (Spock as Christ figure); certainly, more attention is paid to character than in the earlier films, which pays dividends.

Saturday The 14th (Embassy), despite its title, is more a parody of the *Amityville Horror* style movie than Sean Cunningham's bloodfeasts. Richard Benjamin and Paula Prentiss give their usual effective dry performances, but Howard Cohen's direction overplays the deliberately hokey monsters.

Walt Disney are only issuing the less lucrative of their full-length cartoons on video (the real heavyweights like *Fantasia* and *Bambi* still being good for more cinema outings) and *Dumbo*, which follows the recent *Alice In Wonderland* issue, is lesser Disney. Still, there's much to enjoy, if you can take the sentiment (not least the famous "Dance Of The Pink Elephants" sequence, which rivals Tex Avery in its surrealist inventiveness).

Dawn Of The Mummy (Videospace) is really about zombies or flesh-eating ghouls – the addition of a few bandages on the principal monster doesn't alter the fact that Frank Agrama's inept movie really belongs to the Fulci canon.

Fred Schepisi's *Iceman* (CIC), arriving at about the same time as EIV's *Swordkill*, continues the cinematic trend of a man from an ancient era revived in modern times. Schepisi's film is the more sophisticated of the two, eschewing the adventure elements for a carefully detailed 'culture shock' encounter. Excellent performance by John Lone as the displace Neanderthal.

news for horror fans in the pending release of *Death Warm Up* and *CH.U.D.*, two movies that have received a lot of attention for their off-the-wall imagination.

Currently available from this company are two Australian chillers, *Early Frost* (directed by Terry O'Connor) and *Dark Room* (directed by Paul Harmon). Both feature grisly revenge plots by children against their parents.

A real jewel in the Medusa crown is *My Name Is Nobody*, which, next to Sergio Leone's *Once Upon A Time In The West*, is the most quirky and striking of all Italian westerns, with a splendid Morricone score. Although Tonino Valeri is credited as director, it's evident that Leone (who produced this one) made all the larger creative decisions.

Albert De Martino's *The Link* I've discussed earlier in this column, so let's move on to two movies directed by John Old Jr. *Blastfighter* is a vigorous and powerful movie in the *First Blood* idiom, while *Devouring Waves* is a distant cousin of *Jaws* – the monster here being a living fossil, which makes his parentage closer to Arnold's *Creature From The Black Lagoon*. Sloane, Medusa's latest, has excellent action sequences but a rather charmless leading man. Now, if the company can only dust off some older Italian goodies... such as Bava's *Planet of The Vampires*.

NOT HOT

Just when you thought that this month's column would make no



Palace Video unleash *Company of Wolves*, a haunting fairy tale featuring goody girls (above) and grisly ghouls (below).



EXPLORING



Photo—Steve Cook

An Interview with Richard Carpenter

Now that the second season of HTV/Goldcrest's Robin of Sherwood has finished and the third season is presently in production, the series appears to be a resounding success. Targeted at the youth market, and pre-sold to the US, the programme boasts superior production values, American styled pacing and a heavy dose of sword and sorcery. With its directors predominantly culled from the arena of TV commercials, Robin of Sherwood has considerable visual flair, but the strength of the series really originates with the mystic mythology provided by writer Richard Carpenter. He recently spoke to Richard Marson about medieval magic and a Robin Hood for the eighties.

Richard Carpenter started his career as an actor, working in repertory and television, before deciding to branch out and try his hand at writing. In this venture he turned to television scripting and was fortunate to receive encouragement from the head of London Weekend Television's children's programmes. He was commissioned to write two series of *Catweazle*, a delightfully whimsical series concerning a medieval magician transported to modern England which gained quite a cult following among children and adults alike. After 26 episodes the series was dropped, but Carpenter went on to write and create many of Britain's most imaginative and popular TV dramas during the seventies, including *Black Beauty*, *The Ghosts of Motley Hall*, *Dick Turpin*, *Smuggler* and *The Baker Street Boys*.

Then came the idea for a series based on the legend of Robin Hood. Carpenter takes up the story: "It came from both myself and my partner Paul Knight, who is the producer on *Robin of Sherwood*. We've worked together on most of my stuff since *Black Beauty*, so we're known to be a reliable, bankable partnership. *Black Beauty* was, internationally, the most successful children's TV programme ever made. We got

THE LEGEND



Opposite page: The scribe of Sherwood
Richard Carpenter. Above: Forest folk
Much (Peter Llewellyn Williams) with
Robin Hood (Richard Carpenter) and Marion
(Judi Tjund)

EXPLORING THE LEGEND

backing from Harlech Television, who also made *Smuggler*, and we found the necessary U.S. outlets. So it quickly became a sort of avalanche." Carpenter wrote the whole of the first two series on his own, and he explained the process behind his writing: "There are no new stories. Every story that's ever been has already been told. It's only the way you tell it. People tend to remember moments from what they watch, something the characters did, but unless they are film buffs they can't recall the name of the film or TV programme. I try to get three of those 'moments' into each episode."

Robin of Sherwood is imbued with a good deal of mysticism and mystery, two elements present in much of Carpenter's work, but brought to the fore in *Robin*: "I've always been interested in magic. All my work has either had magic or the supernatural in them because, basically, I'm writing for young people who are interested in that sort of thing. I don't think Robin Hood has ever had that slightly eerie, mystical element before. If you read the original ballads, they're just crude knockabout stories. Hit 'em on the head, lots of swordplay almost like mumming plays. Robin Hood gets up in the morning, meets a potter and has a fight. He kills the sheriff, sticks his head on a pole and everybody laughs. End of story. When people say 'why didn't you use the original





stories?", I say you tell me an original story! I suppose they mean more in the tradition of the Richard Greene series which they did way back in the fifties, and which ran to about a hundred and thirty episodes. They kept up an amazing standard and had some very good actors in them, but they weren't original."

"I had to create a Robin for the eighties. I couldn't have a man who said 'follow me men' and they would just follow. He had to be brave yet vulnerable, tough enough to live off the land..."

The linchpin of the series is the enigmatic figure of Herne The Hunter, whose appearances are brief but highly important in the story's narrative. How had the Herne figure come about? "I'd always been interested in the Robin Hood theme, and I'd always said that if we were going to make it really legendary it had to have some element of fate in it. All myths are usually about children who grow up and discover that they're really the King's son, and have to go through hell and bullets before they can get their inheritance. I always saw Robin as a yeoman, a man of the people, at least for the first two series. That's how they describe him in the ballads. He also had some sort of mentor or guide, and I'd read somewhere else that Robin was the people's Arthur, so I decided he needed a Merlin figure."

"I created Herne to fill that space, and I wanted a character who was a bit equivocal, in that you weren't sure whether he was human or whether he was divine, or indeed who he was at all. After the event it's very easy to impose a pattern of logic on your thinking that sounds very well conceived but isn't really true. All you actually do is think 'What can I do to Robin Hood that's different?' - while at the same time keeping it justifiable. It's flashes of desperation rather than inspiration."

The juggling of such a large regular cast must have proved a problem: "Well, with our casts we have two problems. One is availability - we can only use Philip Jackson when he's free to do it, and at first Nickolas Grace (who plays the Sheriff of Nottingham) was a bit diffident too.

Usually though, they love appearing in it, and we've had some excellent guests. The main problem is writing fairly for the whole cast. It's like the plate spinning act at fairs, where you have to run around and make sure all the plates are spinning at the same time. You've got 54 minutes in which to tell a story, which is a luxury really. The mistake that you make if you've been used to half-hour format like me is to think that you've got to inject a lot more story. That's actually not the case. What you can do in an hour is to develop the characters a bit more, in other words, use tiny sub plots. I try and pile in three interlinked stories in each episode. With the third series I'm too busy with my new project to do it all, so we've pulled in other writers, including one very young, very enthusiastic chap called Anthony Horowitz, who's about the only one that's latched onto this idea of developing the characterisation of the regulars in the show. We had hundreds of storylines in from other people, but they were all about visiting characters, not our resident cast. All the outlaws did was to run about a bit and perform a few action scenes. The stories weren't really about them or even Robin, they were about the guest villain."

"If you're in a long-running series, and I know because I was in one, you get extremely fed up just standing around with a couple of lines. You can't understand why, if you're under contract, they're not using you. So I deliberately write scripts with mainly the regulars in mind, and only a few other, smallish, parts. Nobody's complacent about the show, although I still think there's an awful lot wrong with some of it. I think that sometimes my endings are too sudden, and I



Far left: Rula Lenska as Morgwyn of Ravenscar in "The Swords of Wayland". Above left and above: From the same episode, the Hounds of Lucifer and the resurrected Baron de Belleme (Anthony Valentine). Below: Guy of Gisborne (Robert Addie) and Nasir (Mark Ryan) locked in battle.



EXPLORING THE LEGEND

develop only to cut off. I think I can improve on that, and the actors feel they can improve themselves as well."

Overall, however, Carpenter attributes much of the success of the show to its production: "The first series was all directed by Ian Sharp and it nearly killed him doing an episode every twelve days. He did it superbly though. Naturally I'm pleased with Clannad's music, which you know won a BAFTA award. They'll be placing more emphasis on chanting than instrumentals in the next season to make it more evocative of Medieval England. I'm also delighted with Johnny Briggs' art direction. He takes a stone courtyard and transforms it brilliantly. We used to use a barn at Bradford-on-Avon for the interior of Nottingham Castle

and it was a very awkward shape. He built all these extra bits into it and it looked great. Unfortunately we had to leave it because the Department of the Environment, who owned it, were getting fed up as filming prevented people from visiting. One gripe I had though, was that whenever Herne appeared, it looked as though Sherwood Forest was on fire!"

Carpenter plots out all the action sequences in great detail with the show's stunt chief, Terry Walsh: "For instance, that fight in the mud arose from me wanting to show the frustration of two people who hate each other but, because of the mud, are unable to hit each other. We got the absurdity of the situation out of that too. After I've plotted the sequences, I tell Terry to do what the hell he wants, and of course all our cast can handle themselves so it always looks good."

The series received a very good press and an excellent rating when it was first shown, but then Michael Praed announced he was leaving the show: "That was rather a large problem. I got this 'phone call from Paul (Knight) saying we'd have to stop at the end of the second series, but I said no way. If Michael goes that's up to him, but we're going on. The first suggestion was to use magic as the excuse and resurrect him in a new body, but I thought that would look too much like *Doctor Who*. It was too easy, a cop out. Surely, I argued, the most important thing is the legend and tradition of Robin persisting. Going back to modern day guerilla heroes like Che Guevara, their people claim they're still sleeping in the hills, they can't believe they're dead. Similarly, Robin of Locksley is killed, but the continuity is that Herne the Hunter knows there has to be a Robin, so he chooses another. The young man he chooses is the son of the Earl of Huntingdon, which is of course the second Robin Hood legend, which arose in Elizabethan times. The Elizabethans couldn't face the idea of a hero who was only a commoner you see! So I've worked both legends in, given Michael a wonderful exit, and now he's a clothes-peg in *Dynasty*."

"I've created a mythology, taking the legendary figure of Herne, the horned god of the forest, who 'chooses' Robin to lead his band of men. I don't believe a Robin Hood ever existed, but was really an amalgam of about twenty different men, outlaws who were anti-establishment and lived off their wits and petty thievery."

"I'd never stop an actor leaving a show, and we didn't have him under contract anyway. I must say it shook us when he said he was going, but he gave us enough warning for me to write in hints that he was going to die before the last episode, *The Greatest Enemy*, which was, in other words, death. Michael had this rather fey quality, whereas our new guy, Jason Connery, is much more down to earth. However, Michael's prescience will be transferred to Marion, so that the mystical element is retained within the outlaw band."

The third series certainly promises well with plots involving love potions, an old corrupt outlaw brought face to face with the idealism he has lost, and a gruesome little story concerning the Blood Game, "which" Carpenter explains, "is like cock fighting, only with human beings, an idea I got from *The Deer Hunter*." With production nearing completion there is bound to be a fourth series in the pipeline too, although with the opening of Jason Connery's first episode as Robert of Huntingdon all is not well: "He goes back to Herne at the beginning of the episode and says 'Stuff it, mate. I'm not going to be Herne's son, I've got other fish to fry'. A whole year passes and the outlaws quarrel among themselves and eventually split up. Marion and her father are pardoned by King John so that her reputation as the Patty Hearst of Sherwood Forest is all that remains. She doesn't fall in love





with the new Robin at first, of course, and she only follows him into the forest when he is wounded and really needs her. When she hears people saying that Robin Hood is back in Sherwood Forest she gets extremely pissed off because she knows he's six foot under. However, the point is that Robert effectively becomes Robin while remaining himself. Robin is a legend not a single person—he is a principle and that is what is important.

◆
"People in medieval times believed in magic and superstition, just as today's kids readily accept the modern equivalent—technology which produces robots, computers and lasers."
 ◆

"Jason has to prove himself and win them all back—Little John from his farming, Will Scarlet from crime and so on. The opening episode is a sort of 'Magnificent Seven', with him re-uniting them, and I needed two hours to tell the story. These two-hour episodes which punctuate the series were my idea because they are good openers, and kick off a series well, while also being a nice length for video release. You see, two episodes joined together are never so attractive, as they look like what they are, cashing in on something."

With *Robin of Sherwood* now an established success, Carpenter is moving on to new pastures, although he will still be heavily involved in the development of the show. For the future, he is planning an ambitious new science fantasy series about Arthur and the sword in the stone, with the basic premise of formulating some scientific validity for magic. The project will again investigate legends, and will require a large array of special effects for the creation of dragons and similar mythical creatures—hence the need again for American backing. Aside from this, Carpenter intends to write a movie version of his first, and favourite, work, *Catweazle*, on which he will begin work as soon as the rights to the show revert to him in September 1985.

Far left: (Middle) Marion and Robin are married before the enigmatic Herne the Hunter; (Bottom) Stand and deliver! Locksley and Co., Out Laws. Above: (L-R, standing) Will Scarlet (Ray Winstone), Little John (Clive Mantle), Marion, Robin, Friar Tuck (Phil Rose), Nasir; (Kneeling) Much and Edward the village elder (Jeremy Bullock). Below: The nefarious Sheriff of Nottingham (Nicholas Grace).



NIGHTMARE DELIGHTS

Gory, gory, hallelujah! At last someone has written an intelligent and entertaining book analysing the ever popular modern horror film. Kim Newman's *Nightmare Movies* is a critical history of the genre since 1968 which, thankfully, is neither a lecturing thesis or an ignorant cash-in on the subject. In an easy, light-hearted style the author perceptively observes and discusses the trends of the fantasy cinema as related to world events and political/social attitudes of the time.

Beginning with *Night of the Living Dead* as the start of a new era of the horror film after Hammer's romantic gothic classics, Newman – obviously a Romero fan – examines the infamous zombie cheapie at great length in Chapter One. He then goes on to discuss the decline of the British horror film, and outlines how the Amicus EC comic anthologies and Tyburn re-makes could not commercially compete with the American new wave of terror flicks. There are chapters on cinema trends such as Devil Movies (*Rosemary's Baby* to *Satan's School for Girls*), Psycho Killers (*Halloween* to *Unhinged*) and Ghost Stories (*Don't Look Now* to *Poltergeist*); specific sections on selected auteurs (Larry Cohen, David Cronenberg and Brian DePalma); and even a chapter devoted to "weird" horror films (comprehensively covering everything from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* – of course – to John Waters' fantasies and the infamous sex comedy *Thundercrack!*). Then there's the obvious coverage of modern classics (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Evil Dead*, etc.) and the Italian world of Dario Argento's witches, Lucio Fulci's zombies and the ubiquitous cannibal ghouls. *Nightmare Movies* concludes with a mention of *Apocalypse Now*, which Newman views as the end of the new age of the horror film.

It is a pity the presentation does not live up to the impressive text. The title and chapter headline 'alternative' typography is ugly, and the contents page is barely legible. The layout, featuring tacky graphic design, looks as though it was put together in a rush. But the book is generously illustrated with some appropriately gruesome stills, many of them rare (some of the grossest pictures are in stomach-turning colour).

Complete with an Appendix, Filmography and an Index, *Nightmare Movies* is a comprehensive and well-researched book. It doesn't go too deeply into the psychology be-

Fantasy BOOKSHELF

hind the subject, but presents some interesting ideas and observations on wide-screen horror.

Ron Boyd

READ DAWN

Asimov's robot/detective novels of the fifties – *The Caves of Steel* and *The Naked Sun* – are fondly remembered. They had their problems, awkward points which had to be glossed over to make the plot work, but they're honest books which tried to play fair with the reader. So much for the fifties.

This sequel comes from the eighties Asimov, the man who's famous and knows it. The man whose mere name on the cover could sell three hundred blank pages. (He came close to doing just this when he published *Foundation's Edge*.) Longer than both the previous books together, *The Robots of Dawn* has less plot, atmosphere or interest than either. This is a pity, since buried in the unwieldy novel is a nice little SF detective story struggling to be let out.

Again detective Elijah Baley tangles with robotic crime. An unfortunate robot has had its mind quite literally blown. Only one man could have done the deed, and of course he didn't. Armed only with Asimov's 'Three Laws of Robotics' and trusty metallic sidekick R. Daneel Olivaw, Baley pursues his usual police technique – hurling accusations in all directions in hope of frightening a confession out of an innocent bystander. Whenever he goes to bed (this is the novel in which Asimov discovers sex) he has an insight into the answer, nods off, and wakes up next morning to find he's forgotten it again.

Pages and pages are devoted to descriptions of public toilets, to the 'naughty bits' of humanoid robots, to endlessly repeating the 'Three Laws' to wearisome efforts at linking the robot books with the *Foundation* tetralogy... to writing which is simply dull.

The irritating point is that the central SF/detective puzzle is quite legitimate, fair and clever. It even justifies some of the continual references to Asimov's other work. Back in the fifties some editor would have said, "Great story, Isaac, but you need to tighten it up – trim a hundred pages at least."

What we have here, in *The Robots of Dawn*, is a valuable DIY kit – you yourself can cut out padding, pare the book to punchy 1950s size, and acquire the skills of a famous SF editor.

David Langford



Talk about psychedelic furs! Ava Gardner, one of the jungle heroines featured in *Lure of the Tropics*.

THE DISPOSSESSED

To boldly go where no man can every go... The Women's Press have launched the first ever Women's Science Fiction Series, and not before time either!

That women have always written SF is a fact. *Frankenstein* (1816), by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, is generally regarded as the first SF novel. This classic tale began a genre to which women have since contributed an impressive body of work. Yet why is it that only a sprinkling of names comes to mind? The Le Guins and McCaffreys stand their ground on the SF shelves of bookshops against the male names, but against shelves upon shelves of male names.

To redress some of this imbalance the Women's Press's Science Fiction Series combines work by exciting new writers as well as original publications from well known names, and the very best classic works. Four of the eight titles planned for release this year were published in April.

The Female Man by Joanna Russ is a re-issued classic and the Nebula-award-winning author's best known work. This novel is pure innovation: Joanna Russ endlessly experiments with time, sexuality, beliefs, language and form, humour and the macabre. Most important, however, is the use of futuristic fantasy to expose present day social and private worlds. Janet is from the future planet of Wileaway, where no men have existed for hundreds of years. Joanna is a woman of today fighting for a place in patriarchal society, and Jeannine is also from a present time but with an altered past where World War II never happened and The Great Depression still continues. Their very different ideas of life are brought to the surface when they are transported to a different time by Jael Reasoner—who has a deal to make—and they discover that they have more in common than just the first letter of their names. The storyline is complex, challenging and thoroughly worthwhile. *The Female Man* is a sophisticated feminist satire, and is women's SF at its most satirical, inventive and splendid.

The Planet Dwellers is Jane Palmer's first novel. Unlike the usual super heroes and heroines, the protagonists of Ms Palmer's story are ordinary people: Diana, a middle-aged, menopausal mother who hears strange voices; and Yuri, a seldom-sober amateur astronomer whose outrageous claims about the cosmos are well founded. They live in a sleepy village where nothing much happens except con-

frontations with the upper-class bully Daphne Trotter. The Mott are a megalomaniac species who, with the help of Kulp and the Space Distort Net he has invented, inadvertently threaten the future of the Earth by driving Planet Dwellers from their homes in search of fertile lands. It is left to Diana and Yuri to save the Earth. The characters are credible and very comical. *The Planet Dwellers* is an enjoyable and light-hearted interplanetary read.

So much women's SF has been ignored, lost or suppressed over the years. It is wonderful, therefore, to see the male tradition of SF being challenged. I look forward to the rest of the novels, and hope that these first four publications by women and about women are the beginning of a long and successful series.

Alison Bird



JUNGLE GENERATIONS

Bill Feret's timely *Lure of the Tropic, A Pictorial History of The Tropic Temptress in Films, Serials and Comics*, unearths those gems of the jungle genre that have, until now, never been explored by intrepid film researchers.

Even Feret himself admits that he never expected to write the book. It was convenient really, he had already amassed a vast collection of exotic stills, of which nearly two hundred are displayed here.

In the wake of *Indiana Jones*, *Greystoke*, *Conan* I & II, *The Beastmaster* and *Sheena*, not to mention *Romancing The Stone*, comes this detailed, enlightening study of the low-budget melodramas, quickie serials, and simple early exploitation movies which preceded the blockbusters of today. Churned out from the lesser Hollywood studios as hundreds of 'B' movies, these later became the staple diet of late shows

and matinees. They were easy, cheap fodder for the ever-hungry TV generation of the concrete jungle!

Am I alone in my ignorance of the cinema tropical in never having heard of glamorous serial siren Kay Aldridge—more familiar, perhaps, in her incarnation as Nyoka, the jungle queen? Star of Republic Studio's *Perils of Nyoka*, ex-international model and *Vogue* cover-girl, Miss Aldridge confesses in her introduction to the book that Feret's *Lure of the Tropic*, "finally unravelled for me the mystery of just what Nyoka was up to over forty years ago... I boiled in oil, was chased through dangerous caves by evil Arabs, wrestled with Satan, was spiked and drawn-and-quartered... but survived... (yet) I was as innocent as I appeared, and perhaps that is the secret of Nyoka's appeal."

As is sometimes the case, a book which purports to be a study of a minor film genre often turns out to be a much more complicated reference work. *Lure of the Tropic* is not only a salute to plastic foliage and ratty ape-suits, nor is it just a song-song to Amazonian angels, prehistoric pretties and the ladies in leopard skin, it's an investigation into the Hollywood myth-making machine, the teething-ground for many an emergent movie star. It's easy to see how directors like Spielberg, raised on such fantastic adventures would go on to produce the international dicers with death like *Indiana Jones*.

Feret covers the years when such jungle epics were truly fantastical (the world was a smaller, scarier place then!) to today's more sophisticated offerings with equal aplomb. Though there is an obvious nostalgia for the days when, as grandmother Kay Aldridge puts it, "movies mostly embarrassed me by their naive dialogue and lack of story."

Geoff Simm

DEATH'S DAY

Anthony is a strange writer; talented, but with a shaky sense of proportion. His recent novel *Refugee* harrows the reader with piracy, rape, pillage, torture, mutilation, cannibalism... all so overdone that it turns into a running joke, Monty Python style. When he focuses his attention, though, Anthony tells a good story. *On a Pale Horse* is his best for some time.

It is set in an alternate world much like ours, where magic and technology both operate. So does Heaven and Hell, with Satan advertising fiery delights via billboards and TV commercials, while God stays inscrutably silent. Besides God and the Opposi-

tion there's a kind of Permanent Civil Service—five 'incarnations' recruited from ordinary people, who enjoy a sort of immortality and bear the familiar names Time, War, Nature, Fate and Death.

On a Pale Horse is naturally the book of Death. Zane, the slightly whimsical hero, is driven to suicide by disastrous adventures with substandard magic imported from Taiwan. The Grim Reaper calls to collect his soul. In one of those unfortunate domestic accidents Zane's bullet perforates the visitor, not Zane. Death is dead—long live Death! The rules of supernatural bureaucracy force Zane to take the black robe and scythe, and learn (on the job) the business of grimly reaping.

Anthony's had fun making his set-up work—logically explaining, for example, how Zane/Death can cope single-handed with so many simultaneous house calls. Inventive touches include a pale horse which transforms into a pale limousine or even a pale aeroplane as required. But the strict (Christian?) rules of salvation and damnation under which Death works are clearly unfair. For once, this author's slightly priggish tendency to moralize is a success. Instead of (as in the Xanth books) agonizing over questions like whether white lies are justifiable, here Anthony gets down to matters of Life and Death.

Zane, a SF hero at heart, duly revolts against the system: first in small ways by humanely easing, delaying or accelerating death, and finally going on strike altogether when Satan takes out a contract on his (Zane's) girlfriend. There's lots of action, excitement, suspense and good fun. Can Anthony keep it up through four sequels (one book per 'incarnation')? Watch for number two, *Bearing an Hourglass*.

David Langford

Nightmare Movies—by Kim Newman (Proteus Books 160pp £6.95pb/£11.95hb).

On a Pale Horse—by Piers Anthony (Granada 325pp £2.50)

The Robots of Dawn—by Isaac Asimov (Granada 477pp £2.50)

Lure of the Tropic, A Pictorial History of the Tropic Temptress in Films, Serials and Comics—by Bill Feret (Proteus Books 160pp £6.95pb/£11.95hb)

The Female Man—by Joanna Russ (The Women's Press 214pp £1.95).

The Planet Dweller—by Jane Palmer (The Women's Press 147pp £1.95).

"**A**vengers set for TV return" reads the headline. Of course we've heard it all before. Brian Clemens has been trying to get an *Avengers* film project underway for a number of years. However, the latest news is that Sarah Lawson, head of the newly formed Taft Entertainment-Lawson Group in the States, has approved an advanced script with writer Clemens. Rumour also has it that a series is planned to follow their two-hour TV special, although it will all depend on US interest.

In a recent issue of *Broadcast* magazine, Brian Clemens confirmed that Patrick Macnee would again play John Steed, but that the character of Mrs Peel was, as yet, uncast. "We are going back to grass roots, and it will be far more like the old *Avengers* rather than *The New Avengers*." Clemens and Lawson are also optimistic of an American network release, due to the large audiences the series still pulls in syndication, and the success of *The New Avengers* when it was screened on CBS in the mid-seventies.



Another piece of good news from Taft Entertainment is that one of their subsidiary companies, Hanna-Barbera, have been approached by a British television channel to rescreen the complete series of *The Flintstones*. Great news for animation buffs, as it has been generally unseen in this country since the early seventies. The two recent television specials were never part of the original 166 episodes.

Still on the subject of Hanna-Barbera, the latest issue of *Animator Magazine*, edited by David Jefferson, contains an interesting article by Dave Dursley called 'Growing Up with Hanna-Barbera'. This is an affectionate look at the most



by Richard Holliss

successful HB series such as *Top Cat* and the *Huckleberry Hound Show*. As a matter of fact this article originally appeared in Mike Lewis' excellent *World Of Animation* preview issue in 1984. Both are well worth obtaining, and for more information contact David Jefferson at 13 Ringway Road, Park Street, St Albans, Herts, AL2 2RE.

THE FANS FROM UNCLE

Whilst we're discussing television series of the sixties, it should be noted that one of the most popular prime-time shows was *The Men From UNCLE*. Not only was the format of the series very cultish, setting a precedent in TV spy thrillers, but it made overnight stars of actors Robert Vaughn and David McCallum. Two years before *The Men From UNCLE* appeared, Vaughn was a penniless actor. By the end of the first season he was a millionaire with his own herds of livestock and several oil wells. Every Thursday evening the BBC followed the adventures of top secret agent Napoleon Solo of the United Network Command of Law and Enforcement, UNCLE for short, and his battles with the evil THRUSH organisation.

Fan mail for the series totalled 70,000 letters a month. The show garnered fans from all walks of life, army officers, teenage girls, children, students and college professors. An UNCLE appreciation society was set up and kids everywhere could be found wearing the black triangular badges with either the number 11 (Solo's secret code) or the number 2



Top: Purdy (Joanna Lumley) and friend from *The New Avengers* — a hit on the US circuit. Above: Yabba Dabba Do! Meet The Flintstones, all set for a return on British TV.

(for his sidekick Illya Kuryakin played by David McCallum). This was before names instead of names became fashionable, *ala The Prisoner*. Overwhelmed by the popularity of *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, Vaughn told the *News of the World* in 1965, "I'm like Solo in one respect. He enjoys the good things of life; good clothes, fast cars, gourmet cooking and wines. He can also be tough, a bit heartless and mean, if he has to, just like myself. But Solo is insane. Risking his life seems to mean nothing to him. I'm not like Solo when it comes to heroics."

Vaughn's serious approach to the character of Napoleon Solo was shared by the show's multitude of fans. One sixties newspaper reported how the stars were mobbed by thousands of screaming admirers when they visited London, causing scenes normally reserved for pop musicians.



VEHICULAR STARS

One worthy addition to the series was the ultra-sophisticated *UNCLE* car, although if memory serves me right it wasn't used to any great advantage in the show. Robert Vaughn remembered all the wonderful gadgets it was supposed to contain. "... a ramming bumper to crash through barricades, a built-in cannon... a retractable radar loop for locating cars ahead. The rear lights could slide out to one side, so at night, if fired at by a pursuing vehicle, the bullets would miss. A television camera was also built in to the rear to watch following cars, and the trunk lid lifted up at the press of a switch to give the passengers a bullet proof cover." Corgi Toys released a model version of the car called most eloquently the 'THRUSHbuster'. Top sixties spy shows turned the gadget-laden car into something of a cult itself. Firstly there was James Bond's Aston Martin, followed by the *UNCLE* car and the 'Batmobile'. TV heroes such as Emma Peel and John Steed also depended to a great extent on their

unique forms of transport. For Emma it was a Lotus Elan and for Steed a vintage Bentley. Corgi produced models of all of these.

David Rice from Liverpool is anxious to start an appreciation society for *UNCLE* fans across the country. Ultimately he hopes to bring the series back onto television, having sent an eight-page magazine called *The Case for the Revival by British Television of the popular MGM/Arena TV series*, to all four UK channels. If you would like to give David your support then you can contact him at 95 Gainsborough Avenue, Maghull, Nr Liverpool L31 7AU. David assures us that the series hasn't been seen in this country, with the exception of a single episode on BBC television since 1973. The only other occasions when Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin appeared on our screens were during the repeats of



the eight feature films, all of which were originally television episodes in the States.

Film director Richard Donner, who worked on the series, had this to say about *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* "For a TV series *UNCLE* had great production values, it always looked good. MGM took great pride in the making of the product... you could have anything you wanted, like cranes, special construction crews, top special effects people."

With the completion of *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* in March 1968, Robert Vaughn and David McCallum moved onto other film and TV projects. Vaughn was eventually to star in the Gerry Anderson series *The Protectors*, with Nyree Dawn Porter. A dismal affair, it lasted only two seasons (a planned third season was cancelled), and was the second of Anderson's live-action series. The first was the equally disappointing *UFO*. David McCallum went on to star in the BBC series *Colditz*, and the American show *The Invisible Man*. The latter was also pretty dreary, and encouraged some interesting viewers' letters when it was shown on the BBC. Michael Foster of Norwich wrote to the *Radio Times* and said "I can contain myself no longer. How many more times are we to be forced to watch, at peak family viewing time, the disgusting spectacle of a totally naked man flaunting himself on our screens, often in the company of a young lady? In the name of decency and clean living this programme, *The Invisible Man*, should be stopped at once!" It's more than likely that H.G. Wells would have agreed with him. ■



Above: David McCallum as the moody Illya Kuryakin in *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* Above right: The super cool Napoleon Solo (Robert Vaughn) with Whitney Blake in the "Take me to your leader Affair".

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Yes, you've got the message by now. I'm in a bad way. This may be the first posthumously published column in the magazine's history. If I have ended up on the Great Cutting Room Floor in the Sky by the time you read this, I'm sure you will generously contribute to the John Brosnan Memorial Fund. The proceeds will be used to build a giant statue of Yoda eating an Ewok. A *barbecued Ewok*, I should add.

Last month, you may remember, I used this space to discuss a fake science fiction film. It was, of course, *Starman*. This month I briefly want to talk about a *real* SF film – and one you should have all seen by now – *2010*.

I didn't have high hopes for this movie, seeing as it was written and directed by Peter Hyam whose previous three movies had included one halfway good one – *Capricorn One* – and two stinkers – *Hanover Street* and *Outland* (*Hanover Street* in particular has to rank as one of the looniest films of all time).

Admittedly *2010* doesn't start off well; after a prologue telling us what happened in 2001 we get a long and irritatingly 'clever' sequence with Roy Scheider as Floyd, and a Russian scientist conversing on the stairway of a radio telescope while both doing their best to hide from the camera (very Peter Hyam). Nor do the following scenes of sentimental domesticity in Floyd's home bode well for the rest of the film. But, fortunately, when the action abruptly switches to outer space, and the special effects take over, the movie itself finally comes to life.

It really is refreshing to see, at long last, a space movie that makes some attempt to portray space travel with a fair degree of realism. My chief quibble was the treatment of zero gravity and artificial gravity within the two spaceships which seemed rather arbitrary. For example, it wasn't made clear within the script that the purpose of those rotating bits on the Russian ship was to create artificial gravity by means of centrifugal force. And, in fact, you never knew where the characters were supposed to be in the Russian ship at any one time – its lay-out was never made clear to the audience – so therefore you couldn't tell how they managed the transfer from the rotating sections to the zero-gravity part of the ship.

Another example: while the sequ-

It's only a MOVIE

A Column by John Brosnan



In 2010 Dr Chandra (Bob Balaban) brings the HAL 9000 computer back to consciousness. Was it worth it? asks John Brosnan.

ence where the John Lithgow character and a Russian astronaut enter the *Discovery* was a great special effects set-piece it wasn't very logical. Surely the centrifugal force at the nose of the tumbling space ship would have been so great they would have been flung off into space before they could get in through the hatch (and once they were inside 'down' should have been in the direction of the front of the ship and not the floor as it was in the film).

But these and similar quibbles are minor ones and don't detract from what is overall a superior piece of SF movie-making even though it falls a long way short of 2001 itself. The problem is that 2001 didn't need a sequel. After all, it ended with the human race on the verge of the next

stage of cosmic evolution being engineered by the mysterious, god-like aliens, and how do you show that on the screen? The answer is, you don't. What we get instead in 2010 is Jupiter being turned into a second sun. Now ordinarily this would be a pretty impressive event but in terms of what we'd been led to expect in 2001 it's a bit of a damp squib.

Of course, one must remember that 2001 was a collaboration between Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick whereas 2010 is based on a novel by Clarke alone. Significantly, the novel wasn't written because Clarke had a burning desire to write a sequel to 2001. What happened was that Clarke's American agent rang him up in Sri Lanka and said that if he wrote a

synopsis for a sequel he, the agent, could sell it for a million dollars. Now Clarke, after writing his last novel, *The Fountains of Paradise*, had announced he'd retired from writing fiction but it didn't take him long to realize that a million dollars was an offer he could not refuse. And then, while the wheeling and dealing was going on over the hardback and paperback rights, it was strongly hinted by a certain interested party that a movie version by Kubrick was almost a foregone conclusion. Not surprisingly, Kubrick wasn't interested, but, by the time this became common knowledge the 2010 project was snowballing and it didn't matter.

Thus you have two entirely different reasons behind the making of the two movies; 2001 came about because Kubrick wanted to make a new, a completely different kind of space movie (and succeeded); 2010 had its origin in the mind of an agent.

I rest my case.

Returning to the subject of *Starman* for a moment, I see that Harlan Ellison, who I've disagreed with recently in this column, concurs with my opinion of the movie. In his column in *The Magazine of Fantasy & SF* he writes of *Starman*. "What we have here is a 1948 movie made in 1984. A waste of time. A contrived, simple-minded sappy film."

I'll second and third that, Harlan.

And still speaking of Harlan; in *Starburst 80* I pointed out how much the movie *The Terminator* owed to Harlan's *Outer Limits* episode 'Soldier'. Well, I've heard that he accepted an out-of-court settlement of \$65,000 from *The Terminator's* producers over the matter.

GRIMLY FIENDISH

Finally a plug for one of the funniest books I've read recently, *Ghastly Beyond Belief*, by Neil Gaiman and Kim Newman (and the fact that the authors include a mention of this column and *Starburst* has nothing to do with it). It's a collection of hilarious quotes from SF and horror books and movies – the sort of book that once you dip into you can't resist reading more, nor can you resist reading bits out loud to whoever's around at the time. To give you a couple of examples: "What a beautiful night," Pat remarked as they passed alongside the barbed-wire fence which enclosed War Department property. "If only we didn't have to worry about giant crabs." (From, what else? *Night of the Crawls* by Guy N. Smith); and from the movie *It Conquered the World*, Distressed Citizen: "Officer, my husband. He's in an iron lung. It stopped!" Harressed Cop: "Then what are you doing out here? Get back inside and operate it manually."

And it's time I climbed, wheezing, back into my iron lung. Until next time ... maybe. ■



The Filing Cabinet of DR. SALLY GARY

Ah, me! How quickly it comes round again. The ink's hardly dry on last month's column, and already they want another one. Funny thing. No one's written to correct last month's column... yet.

TOUGH TEASERS

"Betcha can't answer these", gloats Steve Quinn of Raynes Park, Surrey. "Can you put a name to a recent horror film with a bald man chasing a young woman?"

C'mon, Steve, sensible questions only! It could be anything.

Steve also wants filmographies for Tigon Films and British Lion. Tough, Steve, tough. But I'll give it a shot. Tigon first: *The Sorcerers* (1966), *Witchfinder General* (1967), *Blood Beast Terror* (1967), *Curse of the Crimson Altar* (1968), *Haunted House of Horror* (1968), *Zeta One* (1969), *Beast in the Cellar* (1970), *Blood on Satan's Claw* (1970), *Creeping Flesh* (1972), *Doomwatch* (1972), *Neither the Sea nor the Sand* (1972).

British Lion: *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (1950), *City of the Dead* (1950), *Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1961), *The Wicker Man* (1973), *The Beast Must Die* (1974), *The Land that Time Forgot* (1974), *At the Earth's Core* (1976), *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976). These are fantasy film indexes. For the non-fantasy stuff... find it yourself!

Steve also wants (greedy blighter!) a run-down of Don Sharp's fantasy directing credits...

Kiss of the Vampire (1963), *Witchcraft* (1965), *Face of Fu Manchu* (1966), *Curse of the Fly* (1966), *Rasputin the Mad Monk* (1966), *The Brides of Fu Manchu* (1967), *Jules Verne's Rocket to the Moon* (1968), *Psychomania* (1972), *Dark Places* (1972).



MUSIC, PLEASE!

Here's a couple of (totally unrelated queries from Colin Beardmore who lives in Stoke-on-Trent. Firstly, he wants to know whether the music used in the "Old Spice" surfing commercial has anything to do with the musical score for *The Omen* (1976). Hah! A bit of culture creeps in. The tune from the commercial is very similar to that of *The Omen*, Colin, but there's not really a connection. The ad music is a snatch from Carmina Burana by Carl

Orff ("O Fortuna" from the Overture or Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi). I have the Deutsche Grammophon version, conducted by Eugen Jochum. Serial number 139 362. This piece was also used in John Boorman's *Excalibur* (1980) and probably a couple of other places too. It's likely Goldsmith's score for *The Omen* was "inspired" by Orff's piece (written between 1935 and 1936).

Colin also wants a fantasy filmlog for that great British character actor, Michael Gough. I have to

shamefacedly admit that I didn't do too well with this, so I'll throw it open to readers to complete. But to get you started: *Dracula* (1958), *Horror of the Black Museum* (1959), *Konga* (1960), *Black Zoo* (1963), *Dr Terror's House of Horrors* (1965), *Circus of Blood* (1967), *Berserk* (1968), *They Came From Beyond Space* (1968), *Crucible of Horror* (1970), *Trog* (1970), *Horror Hospital* (1973), *The Legend of Hell House* (1973). And with that I wave the white flag on filmographies for a while!



MRS MAX

Lee Gastoni of Wallacey wants to know who played Max Rockatanky's wife in the first *Mad Max* picture. Joanne Samuel.

MAGNIFYING GAG

Somebody (I just can't read the signature) has written from Romford, Essex with a really trivial question. "In *Top Secret* there is a joke in which a man holds a magnifying glass in front of his face, distorting his features, then the camera swings round and it turns out it's not a magnifying glass and his face really is distorted. The question is, what's the famous horror film still this gag is taken from?"

Whew! Everybody get that? Okay, the famous still, used in just about every book on horror movies since the year zero is of Peter Cushing

from the 1973 Tigon effort, *The Creeping Flesh*. And here's the still in case there's one or two people out there who haven't the faintest what we're talking about!

MOON ZERO WHO?

A still request from A. Haig of Caerphilly. "Can you print a picture from that 1969 camp classic Hammer SF film *Moon Zero Two*. It's a laugh a minute and the costumes were just wonderful!" Your wish, A. Haig, is everyone else's misfortune!

And that's it for another month. In the meantime...

Send all your fantasy questions to:
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Far left: Peter Cushing examines The Creeping Flesh (1973). Carry on camping it up in Moon Zero Two (1969). Top: Mr and Mrs Mad Max mend mechanical malfunctions. Above: The face cream didn't work for Michael Gough in The Legend of Hell House (1973)!



ROBIN OF SHERWOOD